



CLERKING HANDBOOK

A practical guide for governing board clerks
in maintained and academy schools



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This handbook has been produced by NCOGS for regional COGS to share with their clerks and governance professionals. It may be used in whole or part by governors, trustees and clerks, on the understanding NCOGS is acknowledged as the source.

Introduction

Welcome to clerking. A clerk to the governing board is the governance professional, required to provide advice, guidance and effective administrative support.

High quality professional clerking is crucial to the effective functioning of the board. Clerking is not only about good organisation and administration, but also and more importantly, about helping the board understand its role, functions and legal duties. This is crucial in helping the board exercise its duties confidently in a timely manner to stay focused on its core functions:

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
- Holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils and the effective and efficient performance management of staff
- Overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent.

All maintained schools and academy trusts must appoint a clerk to their governing board. Boards governing different types and sizes of organisation will have different clerking needs but should set demanding standards for the service they expect from their clerk and assure themselves that they are employing a clerk with suitable skills and training. Consequently, they should expect to pay an appropriate amount commensurate to the professional service they expect their clerk to deliver.

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The role of a clerk is about helping the board to understand its role, functions and legal duties and to provide clear impartial advice to the board. The clerking role should be a discrete and independent function but remain accountable to the chair. The board must have regard to advice from the clerk as to the nature of their functions.

(Maintained School Governance: Structures and Roles 2020)

A clerk is expected to demonstrate a commitment to developing and improving their own knowledge and skills; learning from others to improve their own practice; sharing their skills with others, including board members; and undertaking relevant training and development opportunities.

Professional clerking is recognised as one of the key steps to effective governance. An effective clerk builds and maintains professional working relationships within the board as the foundation for providing impartial advice and support. Good relationships are also essential to establishing open communication and ensuring smooth information flow between the board, the executive leaders and where required, staff, parents and the local community.

The voluntary nature of governance makes it essential that boards conduct their business efficiently to make the best possible use of everyone's time. Professional clerking has a vital role to play in meeting the administrative and procedural requirements of boards and enabling efficient and effective discussion and decision making.

There are many sources of help and information available to a clerk and their board, some of which are listed within the following pages. This clerking handbook aims to lead a clerk through the majority of procedures they will be dealing with within their board and committee meetings.

The Role of the Clerk

All maintained schools and academy trusts must appoint a clerk to their governing board as set out in **The School Governance (Roles, Procedures and Allowances) (England) Regulations 2013 for maintained schools and The Academies Financial Handbook**. In overall terms the duties include:

- Providing advice to the board on governance, constitutional and procedural matters
- Providing effective administrative and organisational support to the board and its committees
- Ensuring the board is properly constituted
- Managing information effectively in accordance with legal requirements.

A brief explanation of these duties follows with information on where further detail will be found within this handbook.

Providing advice to the board on governance, constitutional and procedural matters

This handbook explains in detail the procedures a clerk will encounter in the day to day organisation of board meetings, elections, appointment of governors and trustees and the structure of the board. If a clerk is aware that procedure is not being followed s/he should alert the meeting. The clerk provides guidance to ensure the board works in compliance with the appropriate legal and regulatory framework and understands the potential consequences of non-compliance.

Providing effective administrative and organisational support to the board and its committees

An effective clerk has a huge impact on the smooth running of board meetings and committee meetings. It is also important to build relationships with the administrative support team within school, as clerks may need to enlist their help for situations such as parent elections. Details of preparing agendas and writing minutes are given in the sections on meetings later in this handbook.

Ensuring the board is properly constituted

It is well worth spending time to become familiar with the Instrument of Government (in a maintained school) or Articles of Association (in an academy school) for the setting. This document details the number and categories of governors or trustees which make up the board. Associate members are not mentioned on the Instrument of Government, as they are not governors or trustees. Further detail on the governance structure of local authority maintained schools and academies will be found in the section 'Governance Structures'.

Managing information effectively in accordance with legal requirements

This will include the need to:

- Maintain an up to date record of names, addresses, email addresses and category of board members and their term of office
- Ensure that relevant information regarding the board and its members is published on the school website and notified to Get Information About Schools (GIAS) and, for academy school trust board members, that Companies House is notified
- Advise the local authority, Diocese or Trust as appropriate when there are changes of membership to the board
- Maintain copies of current terms of reference and membership of committees and working parties and nominated governors or trustees with specific responsibilities e.g. safeguarding
- Advise governors and trustees and appointing bodies of expiry of the term of office before the term expires so elections or appointments can be organised in a timely manner; inform the board of any changes to its membership
- Maintain meeting attendance records and advise the board of non-attendance of governors or trustees
- Ensure that a register of board pecuniary interests is maintained, reviewed annually and lodged within the school
- Check with the school and, where appropriate, the church authority that a DBS disclosure has been successfully carried out, together with Declaration of Eligibility for every governor and trustee.

This is where the bulk of the 'in between meetings' work is contained. Keeping up to date with the movement of all the governors and trustees can be difficult. It is essential to have a list of the composition of the board with names, addresses, post codes, telephone numbers and the date of the term of office for each governor, from this list it will be easier to be aware of what is happening. The key is to look ahead.

The Department for Education **Clerking Competency Framework** gives guidance on the clerking (or governance professional) role. The exact nature of the duties the clerk is expected to perform will be within the Job Description for the role. Governing boards are many and varied and each will have different expectations of the clerking role, so it is important to have a conversation with the chair early on to establish how the board operates. An annual appraisal for the clerk by the chair is recommended, but regular conversations in between will ensure that everything is on track. The clerking role is often contracted for a set number of hours each week, or for an annual 'pot' of hours. Making a note of the hours worked will ensure that sufficient time has been allocated to the role. A 'Clerking Hours Calculator' has been provided in the 'Useful Documents' section at the end of this handbook.

Documents which advise on the role of the clerk

- [The School Governance \(Roles, Procedures and Allowances\) \(England\) Regulations 2013](#) – Legislation.gov.uk
- [Clerking Competency Framework](#) – Department for Education (DfE)
- [The Academies Financial Handbook](#) – Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA)



Governance Structures



Regardless of how the governing body is constituted, a key point remains: the clerk has a pivotal role in ensuring good governing. It is crucial for the clerk to know the governing body he/she is working with and to respond accordingly. A good clerk can help a governing body overcome challenges resulting from the way school governing is constructed and help to ensure it runs properly.

(Professor Chris James, Bath University)

The governance structure of maintained schools

All maintained school governing bodies must be constituted under the 2012 Constitution Regulations. The statutory guidance ‘The constitution of governing bodies of maintained schools’ provides information about the constitution of bodies, their size, membership and skills.

The constitution of all maintained school governing bodies/boards is set out in their Instrument of Government. The governing board drafts the instrument and the clerk submits it to the local authority (LA). Before the governing board submits the draft instrument to the LA, it must be approved by any foundation governors and where relevant, any trustees and/or the appropriate religious body.

The LA must check if the draft instrument complies with the legal requirements, including the relevant guiding principles for the constitution of governing bodies. If the instrument complies with the legal requirements, the LA will ‘make’ the instrument. The instrument can be reviewed and changed at any time.

Standalone maintained school

The board must have a minimum of 7 members, with no upper limit, which will comprise of the following:

- The headteacher (if they choose to be a governor)
- One elected staff governor (from across the teaching and non-teaching staff)
- A minimum of two elected parent governors
- One local authority governor
- Co-opted governors (optional as required)
- Foundation governors (VA, VC and Foundation schools only).

The total number of co-opted governors who are also eligible to be elected or appointed as staff governors (when counted with the staff governor and the headteacher/s) must not exceed one third of the total membership of the board.

Documents which advise on the constitution



Information on the different categories of governor in maintained schools and how they are elected or appointed can be found in the DfE statutory guidance: Constitution of governing bodies of maintained schools.

- [The Constitution of Governing Bodies of Maintained Schools](#)

CLERKING IN ACTION...



Can we renew a parent governors term of office?

Q. We have a parent coming to the end of their term of office – can we just renew their term of office?

A. No. If a parent is coming to the end of their term of office the electorate (the parents and carers at the school) need to be told that there is a vacancy and be given a chance to put themselves forward. Even if the existing parent governor is willing to stand again and the school doesn’t think anyone else is interested (or they think the ‘wrong’ person might be interested!) the vacancy must be publicised. The outgoing parent governor can most certainly nominate themselves again if they wish, but if there is more than one nomination for a single vacancy then an election must be held. If they are unsuccessful in that election the board could appoint them (on the basis of the skills they would bring) to a vacant co-opted position. Alternatively their skills could be utilised as an associate member or they could complete a nomination form to become a foundation governor.

Federations with two or more maintained schools

The board must have a minimum of 7 members, with no upper limit, all federations must include:

- Two (and only two) elected parent governors from across the schools. Additional parents could be co-opted onto the board, or fill foundation positions, if available, based on the skills they bring
- The headteacher of each federated school (or the executive headteacher of the federation, if there is one) unless the headteacher resigns as a governor
- One elected staff governor (from across the teaching and non-teaching staff)
- One local authority governor
- Co-opted governors (optional, as required)
- Foundation governors (VA, VC and Foundation schools only).

The total number of co-opted governors who are also eligible to be elected or appointed as staff governors (when counted with the staff governor and the headteacher/s) must not exceed one third of the total membership of the board of the federation.

Governance Structures continued

It is possible that each school within a federation will have its own substantive headteacher and in these circumstances, each headteacher will be entitled to a place on the governing board.

Additional requirements for foundation and voluntary schools

Foundation and voluntary schools are required to have partnership or foundation governors in addition to the categories above as follows:

- Foundation and foundation special schools without a foundation must have at least two partnership governors
- Foundation and foundation special schools that have a foundation but are not a qualifying foundation school must have at least two foundation governors
- Qualifying foundation schools must have up to two more foundation governors than all other governors
- Voluntary aided schools must have two more foundation governors than all other governors
- Voluntary controlled schools must have at least two foundation governors.

Documents which advise on the legal structure of maintained schools



- [The School Governance \(Constitution\) \(England\) Regulations 2012](#) – Legislation.gov.uk
- [The School Governance \(Roles, Procedures and Allowances\) \(England\) Regulations 2013](#) – Legislation.gov.uk
- [The Constitution Of Governing Bodies of Maintained Schools](#) – Department for Education
- [The Governance Handbook](#) – Department for Education

The governance structure of academies

An academy trust is a charitable company limited by guarantee. All academy trusts have at least two layers of governance:

- **The Members of the trust, who are akin to shareholders, are the subscribers to its memorandum of association and any other individuals permitted under its charitable articles of association. Members have a limited financial liability to the trust in the event it is wound up and have the power to appoint and remove trustees**
- **The trustees, who are responsible for the three core strategic governance functions. The trustees are also the directors of the charitable company. They are responsible for ensuring the charitable company achieves its objectives, as well as compliance with charity and company law and the academy trust's funding agreement.**

Single academy trusts, multi academy trusts and free schools are all set up as limited liability companies and are therefore registered with [Companies House](#). They cannot register with the Charity Commission as they are exempt charities (they automatically have charitable status and must therefore comply with charity law.)

A standalone academy or single academy trust (SAT) is a single legal entity responsible for one academy that has its own articles of association and funding agreement with the Secretary of State.

Multi academy trusts (MATs) are also a single legal entity but the board of trustees is accountable for a number of academies in the MAT. This means that an additional layer of governance is possible through the delegation of governance functions to local governing bodies, made up of local governors. Each academy may have a local governing body to which the MAT trustees may delegate some governance functions. Alternatively, local governing bodies may themselves govern more than one academy. Local governors who sit on local governing bodies are not trustees of the academy trust unless they also sit on the trust's board.

The Department for Education (DfE) recommends that trusts should ideally have at least five members, though it should be noted that trusts could have more should they choose to. Five members ensures that the trust has enough members to take decisions via special resolution (75% of members agree) without requiring unanimity, while minimising circumstances in which a split membership prevents decisions being taken by ordinary resolution (at least 51% of the members are in favour).

All individuals involved in the governance of a MAT, whether at trust level or at the local governing body level, should know who the trustees are and understand what functions have been delegated by the trust to the local governing body or bodies.

A clear written scheme of delegation should set out which responsibilities have been delegated to local governing bodies and which remain with the trust board.

A lead sponsor will have majority control of the academy trust by having the right to appoint the majority of its Members. Likewise, the minority or majority control of the church in a voluntary controlled or voluntary aided school is retained on conversion to academy status through minority or majority control over the appointment of Members of the trust – who in turn appoint the majority of the trustees. Employees of the Trust should not be appointed as members.

Academy trusts have almost complete flexibility to shape their governance arrangements and design the constitution of their boards and local governing bodies as they see fit. There are very few requirements relating to the constitution of the board of trustees in the model articles of association. The board of an academy trust must include at least two elected parent governors – in a MAT the parents can be represented at local governing body level or on the trust's board.

Converting to academy status is a good opportunity to review the constitution of the existing governing body and make changes as necessary to ensure that governance arrangements will be fit for purpose. Academy trusts of newly converted schools are required to set out in the governance statement, submitted with their first audited accounts, what they have done to review and develop their governance structure and composition of the board of trustees.

It is essential for the clerk to have an understanding of the legal structure of SATs and MATs and of the specific constitution and procedures of the setting which they are clerking. This includes the scheme of delegation which dictates how and where decisions are made and communicated.

Information on the categories of trustee and how they are elected or appointed will be found in the Articles.

Governance Structures continued

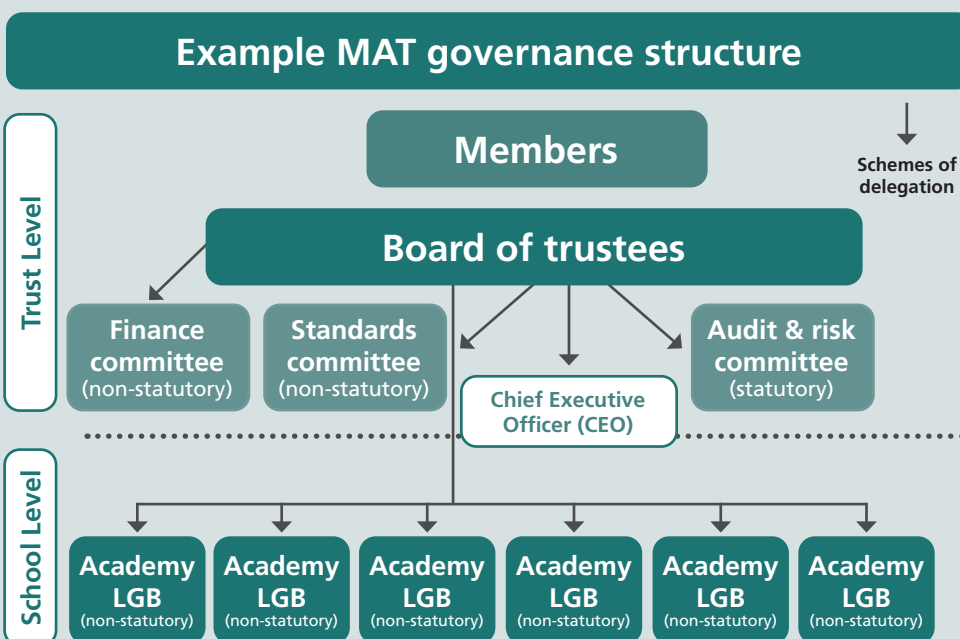
Documents which advise on the legal structure of academy trusts

- [The Academies Financial Handbook](#) – Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA)
- [Academy Trust Governance – Structures and Role Descriptors](#) - Department for Education (DfE)
- [The Governance Handbook](#) – Department for Education (DfE)

Documents which inform the specific constitution and procedures of an academy trust

- **The funding agreement:** The funding agreement provides the framework for the academy or free school to operate in. A specific academy's funding agreement can be found on the [School and college performance tables](#) website
- **The articles of association:** The articles of association can be found on [Companies House](#) under the name of the Trust and the 'Filing history' tab. The articles describe an academy trust's charitable object(s) and governance arrangements such as how trustees are appointed and the quorum for meetings. The articles of association must also appear on the academy website
- **The scheme of delegation:** [The Academies Financial Handbook](#) identifies the trust's duty to publish its governance structure on the trust website including: 'the structure and remit of the trust's members, board of trustees, committees and local governing bodies (the trust's scheme of delegation for governance functions), and the full names of the chair of each'.

The scheme of delegation is the document that clerks will probably refer to most as it will help determine the content of agendas for the trust board and its committees including local governing bodies (LGBs). It is important to note that the scheme of delegation may be different for each academy in the trust as depicted in the diagram below:



Clerks may be asked to clerk just the trust board meetings, the trust board and its trust level committees or the trust board, trust level committees and LGBs. Some MATS have their own governance officer or company secretary who will ensure that the trust board complies with relevant legislation and regulations, the clerk's role being to provide administrative assistance. As the role can vary in the responsibilities required of the clerk, clerks should ensure that they have a comprehensive job description and appropriate support to fulfil all legal duties of the role.

The governance structure of free schools

Free schools have the same freedom as other academy trusts. The proposer group need to use the pre-opening period to recruit skilled trustees. They should design governance structures and reporting arrangements that will drive improvement in their school. Pre-opening guidance on governance is provided by The Department for Education to every free school proposer group. For university technical colleges there is a requirement that nominees of the employer and university sponsors must together form the majority on the board of trustees.

The governance structure of pupil referral units

Regulations require local authorities to establish management committees to run pupil referral units in their area, to make provision for the constitution (including composition) and procedures of management committees and to delegate specific powers to management committees. The management committee must have a strategic role setting out and monitoring the aims and objectives of the unit to ensure children are safe, have their needs met and receive a good standard of education.

In terms of the composition of management committees, they must contain at least seven, but no more than 20 members:

- At least one parent, but no more than one fifth of the total committee
- At least one staff member, but no more than one third of the total committee
- At least one local authority member, but no more than one third of the total committee
- Community members, must outnumber all of the other members combined
- Sponsor members, entirely optional, but where a committee has sponsor members there must be at least one, but no more than two.

When appointing community members, local authorities (or the management committee itself where it is already in place) must first seek to appoint representatives from local schools. The regulations also specify that local authority employees, other than persons employed by the local authority to work in a school maintained by them, cannot be community members.

Roles and Responsibilities

The role of chair, vice chair and committee chair

The role of the chair

As with the role of the clerk encompassing far more than taking minutes, so the role of chair includes much more than chairing meetings.

The Department for Education's (DfE) guidance documents on governance structures and roles in maintained schools and academy trusts provide the following information:

Maintained Schools: *"The chair and vice chair(s) should encourage the board to work together as an effective team, building its skills, knowledge and experience. The chair should ensure that everyone is actively contributing relevant skills and experience, participating constructively in meetings, and is actively involved in the work of committees. The chair, in conjunction with the clerk, should also ensure that everyone understands the expectations placed upon them and that they receive appropriate induction, training and development.*

The chair should undertake an annual performance review of the clerk and should look to the clerk, as the governance professional, for advice and information to support their role." **Maintained School Governance: Structures and Role Descriptors**

Academies: *"An effective chair and vice chair provide visionary strategic non-executive leadership to the academy trust and, as with other Academy Trustees, the roles of chair and vice chair are voluntary ones.*

The chair, supported by the vice chair and the clerk, plays an important role in the academy trust, which goes beyond chairing meetings. The chair takes the lead in ensuring the effective functioning of the trust board and has a vital role in setting the highest expectations for professional standards of governance. It is the chair's responsibility to give the trust board clear leadership and direction, keeping it focused on its core functions."

Academy Trust Governance- Structures and Role Descriptors

Although the chair has a role in leading and coordinating the work of the board, they have no greater powers than any other governor. It is important to note that the headteacher is accountable to the board and not to the chair. As with any other governor, the chair cannot usually act alone, they should act on delegated authority from the board. Chair's action is the one exception.

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The chair, with support from the vice chair and the clerk/governance professional, is responsible for ensuring the effective functioning of the board and has a vital role in setting the highest of expectations for professional standards of governance.

(The Governance Handbook)

CLERKING IN ACTION...



Chair's Action

In the case of an emergency, chair's or vice chairs can act alone in certain circumstances:

Maintained schools

In maintained schools the chair has automatic delegation through the governing body procedure regulations to carry out any function that can be delegated to an individual when the chair decides that urgent action is required. The circumstances where this urgent action can be taken is when the chair determines that a delay would be seriously detrimental to the interests of:

- (a) the school;
- (b) any pupil at the school, or their parent; or
- (c) a person who works at the school.

Similarly, the vice chair can take urgent action in the circumstances described above if the chair would not be able to do so before a detriment is suffered. This could be the case if the post of chair was vacant or if, for example the chair was on holiday with no communication channels available.

Academies

The delegation of functions in the case of an emergency is not automatic in an academy and would need to be specified in the scheme of delegation.

Roles and Responsibilities continued

It is possible to appoint more than one person to share the role of chair, or similarly the role of vice chair, if the board believes this is necessary and in the best interests of the school. The board would need to ensure that any role-sharing arrangement does not lead to a loss of clarity in its leadership.

The clerk has an important function to play to support the chair through:

- Ensuring the board meets its statutory responsibilities through agenda planning with the chair and headteacher
- Advising the chair on regulations and procedures
- Supporting the chair to ensure meetings are conducted appropriately
- Ensuring time is built into meetings for evidencing monitoring and accountability
- Supporting the chair in planning ahead and preparing for future meetings
- Working with the chair to ensure the governing board is functioning effectively and that the workload is distributed
- Advising governors on suitable training and development opportunities
- Supporting and challenging the chair to ensure the board focuses on its strategic priorities rather than the operational
- Advising the chair when the board is deviating from the three core functions of governance.

In order to achieve these functions, it is key that the clerk builds an effective professional working relationship with the chair based on mutual respect and trust. The clerk can facilitate this by:

- Agreeing with the chair the frequency and methods of communication
- Meeting with the chair and headteacher to consider the meeting dates and agenda items for the year for full board and committee meetings
- Meeting with the chair prior to board meetings to go over the agenda items and timings
- Ensuring that a comprehensive job description is available for the role of clerk which is understood by the chair and shared with the board
- Agreeing an appraisal cycle or regular review of the performance of the clerk.

The role of co-chairs

There is an opportunity to share the load, by appointing co-chairs. We need to acknowledge that taking on the role of the chair can be daunting and it can be difficult to find an individual who has not only the will and the skill, but also the time to commit to the role. The prospect of sharing the position, playing to the strengths of each of the co-chairs and knowing that there is someone else to share the load and the responsibility can make the job much more achievable for a greater range of people, including busy 'professionals'.

The DfE regulations allow maintained schools to operate with co-chairs, academy schools will need to check their articles, but there is nothing in the model articles which would preclude academies from having co-chairs.

In any co-chair model communication is the key to making it work, with a clear definition of which co-chair is responsible for which area. Boards will firstly need to agree that they are happy to adopt a co-chair model and be satisfied that it would not lead to any lack of clarity in leadership. The headteacher/principal, governors or trustees and clerk will need to know which individual is leading on each area and who they should contact.

Local Governing Body

If you are a Local Governing Body (LGB) within a multi-academy trust the clerk should check that the Terms of Reference for the LGB allow for co-chairs, or ask the Trust clerk if the Terms of Reference do not cover this area before proceeding.

How does the election process work?

The board will first need to agree that they are happy to adopt a co-chair model and be satisfied that it would not lead to any lack of clarity in leadership. It is possible to have a 'solo' chair nomination and a co-chair nomination in the same election. The board does not need to opt for only a co-chair model or only a solo chair model.

The two individuals wishing to stand as co-chairs put forward one joint nomination, so the board is voting for person A and person B as one entity.

Do we still need a vice-chair?

If you have co-chairs you still require a vice-chair.

What happens if one of the co-chairs leaves?

If one of the co-chairs resigns, either from the role of the co-chair, or from the board as a whole, the other co-chair does not continue in post. A new election will need to be held. The same would apply if one of the co-chairs comes to the end of their term of office.

The remaining co-chair can stand again as a solo chair, or join forces with another member of the board to put forward a joint nomination with the new individual.

Do the co-chairs each have a casting vote?

The position of chair only has one casting vote, which is shared by the two co-chairs.

The two individuals have one vote each as governors, but only one vote between them when using the chairs' casting vote.

Is there anything to prevent two parent governors sharing the role of chair?

Two parent governors can share the role. There may be occasions when this means that both co-chairs would not be able to sit on a panel for a formal proceeding, as they may have prior knowledge of the issue.

The role of the vice chair

Both the maintained school **procedure regulations** and the **model articles of association** for academies, determine that boards must elect a vice chair.

There is nothing detailed about the role of the vice chair in the DfE's **Maintained School Governance: Structures and Role Descriptors** or **Academy Trust Governance- Structures and Role Descriptors** other than that of supporting the chair. The **Governance Handbook** does suggest that the vice chair might have responsibility for individual governor and board development. The role of vice chair is often underutilised. The chair could work with the vice chair to determine where each other's strengths lie and allocate the work accordingly, in order that the vice chair gains experience to put themselves in good stead to take on the role of chair in the future if appropriate.

There is further information about the role of the vice chair on page 18 of this handbook.

Roles and Responsibilities continued

Chairs of committees

Maintained schools

There are no statutory committees for maintained schools, however many boards choose to set up a committee structure for effective management of the workload. The **governing body procedure regulations** determine that where the board does set up committees, they must determine the membership and delegated responsibilities and review these annually. The delegated responsibilities are set out in the terms of reference for the committee.

“Committees of the board must also be clerked by someone with the necessary skills and knowledge. The headteacher cannot act as a clerk. In the absence of a clerk at a meeting a governor, who is not the headteacher and has the necessary skills and knowledge, can step-in for the purposes of that meeting, but this should not happen on a regular basis.” (Maintained School Governance: Structures and Role Descriptors)

Academies

The **Academies Financial Handbook** produced by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) determines that the academy trust must establish an audit and risk committee, appointed by the board.

- Trusts with an annual income over £50 million must have a dedicated audit and risk committee
- Other trusts must either have a dedicated audit and risk committee or can combine it with another committee, such as finance

The audit and risk committee should meet at least three times a year.

Multi academy trusts (MATs) may also choose to set up local governing bodies for their academies which are committees of the MAT board. The chair of a local governing body (LGB) therefore fulfils the same function as a committee chair.

The role of the committee chair

Each committee established by the board must have a chair. Chairing a committee can help to develop leadership skills in order to address successful succession planning. As with the chair of the board, the committee chair's role extends beyond effective chairing of the meetings. The committee chair's role includes:

- Setting the dates of meetings for the committee for the year taking into account any dates when statutory responsibilities need to be fulfilled and milestones in the school improvement plan
- Setting the committee agendas with the clerk and headteacher being mindful of matters that will be covered at full board meetings and on other committees
- Ensuring the committee members have the skills and experience required to carry out the delegated functions and arrange training and develop opportunities as appropriate
- Building positive relationships with other partners such as key school staff and external advisers
- Ensuring that minutes from committee meetings are shared with all governors or trustees especially with respect to decisions made under delegated powers.

The role of the chair of a committee is vital to the effective contribution of the committee to the strategic operation of the board. Much of the work undertaken between board meetings may be delegated to committees, the board appoints committees and agrees their terms of delegation. As with all delegated responsibilities the accountability still lies with the board, so the activity of the committee must be reported. This is often achieved

by circulating the minutes from the committee to the full board and the chair of the committee responding to questions at full board meetings. It is important that if something has been delegated to a committee to undertake the work is not duplicated at board level, or by another committee. In a MAT the local governing bodies are, in effect, committees of the trust board, delegated responsibility to oversee particular aspects within individual schools in the trust.

The chair needs to ensure that governors, trustees or associate members who sit on the committee are familiar with and understand the terms of reference they are operating under, so they are clear on what has been delegated to them by the board. The chair will coordinate the work of the committee, to fulfil any relevant statutory obligations on behalf of the board and ensure that the committee contributes effectively to the annual cycle of business. The committee chair will need to work with the chairs of other committees, the chair of the board, the headteacher/principal and the clerk to make sure there is no duplication across the committees and the board.



Professional clerking builds and maintains strong and effective working relationships with the chair and others to give the board confidence in the advice and guidance they provide.

(Clerking Competency Framework)

Working with the clerk, the committee chair will set strategic agendas and ensure that the committee has the information it needs to operate effectively. They will promote good working relationships within the committee, ensuring that members' strengths, skills and interests are recognised and utilised to help achieve the committee's objectives. The chair of the committee may be responsible for having an 'annual conversation' with committee members, discussing how individuals feel the operation or effectiveness of the committee could be improved and how they could contribute. The chair of the committee may also encourage the continued personal development of the members' knowledge and understanding, including through recommending relevant training. The chair may formulate a committee development plan at the beginning of the academic year, consistent with the priorities of the board and the school.

The committee chair will ensure that meetings are effectively planned and chaired, stay strategic and focus on the identified areas of responsibility; ensuring that individuals carry through on actions they have been assigned. The chair should agree the draft minutes with the clerk promptly, so these can be circulated to the board. The chair should ensure that any potential conflicts of interest are appropriately handled and that members of the committee are clear where confidentiality needs to be maintained.

Some boards have a chairs meeting, where the chair of the board and the committee chairs, or local governing body chairs, can meet to exchange information, fine-tune agendas and plan the next round of meetings.

Roles and Responsibilities continued

The role of trustees and governors

What's different?

Many believe that the role of an academy trustee is broadly similar to that of a maintained school governor, but an individual serving an academy board is also acting as a charity trustee and a company director. It is true however, that there is a significant overlap between the trustee, director and governor responsibilities, as illustrated below:

Trustee duties under charity law are to:

- Ensure the charity is carrying out its purposes for the public benefit
- Comply with the charity's governing document and the law
- Act in the charity's best interests
- Manage the charity's resources responsibly
- Act with reasonable care and skill
- Ensure the charity is accountable.

The statutory duties for company directors are to:

- Act within their powers
- Promote the success of the company
- Exercise independent judgment
- Exercise reasonable care, skill and diligence
- Avoid conflicts of interest
- Not accept benefits from third parties
- Declare any interest in proposed transactions or arrangements.

The three core roles for governors are to:

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

The accountability for the role as trustees, company directors and governors may lie with different organisations, but the consistent theme is to deliver the best possible outcomes for the pupils in the school.

Local governing bodies/committees

In a multi academy trust (MAT) the clerk may be seeking governors to serve on a local governing body or committee (LGB). The responsibilities and levels of delegation given to this group will be defined through the Scheme of Delegation; however, the accountability will always lie with the trustees at trust board level.

The skills required will vary depending upon the remit of the committee or LGB, in some trusts the local committee or LGB is purely advisory, with no delegated responsibilities; in other trusts there will be high levels of delegated function.

Principles and personal attributes

The principles and personal attributes that individuals bring to the board are as important as their skills and knowledge. These qualities enable board members to use their skills and knowledge to function well as part of a team and make an active contribution to effective governance.

All those elected or appointed to boards should fulfil their duties in line with the seven principles of public life (the Nolan principles). They should also be mindful of their responsibilities under equality legislation, recognising and encouraging diversity and inclusion. They should understand the impact of effective governance on the quality of education and on outcomes for all children and young people. In addition, all those involved in governance should be:

Committed: Devoting the required time and energy to the role and ambitious to achieve best possible outcomes for young people. Prepared to give time, skills and knowledge to developing themselves and others in order to create highly effective governance.

Confident: Of an independent mind, able to lead and contribute to courageous conversations, to express their opinion and to play an active role on the board.

Curious: Possessing an enquiring mind and an analytical approach and understanding the value of meaningful questioning.

Challenging: Providing appropriate challenge to the status quo, not taking information or data at face value and always driving for improvement.

Collaborative: Prepared to listen to and work in partnership with others and understanding the importance of building strong working relationships within the board and with executive leaders, staff, parents and carers, pupils/students, the local community and employers.

Critical: Understanding the value of critical friendship which enables both challenge and support and self-reflective, pursuing learning and development opportunities to improve their own and whole board effectiveness.

Creative: Able to challenge conventional wisdom and be open-minded about new approaches to problem-solving; recognising the value of innovation and creative thinking to organisational development and success. ([The Competency Framework for Governance](#))

Documents which advise on the roles of board members in maintained schools and academies

- [The Governance Handbook](#) – Department for Education (DfE)
- [The Competency Framework for Governance](#) – Department for Education (DfE)
- [Academy model articles of association](#) – Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA)
- [Maintained School Governance: Structures and Role Descriptors](#) – Department for Education (DfE)
- [Academy Trust Governance – Structures and Role Descriptors](#) – Department for Education (DfE)
- [The Academies Financial Handbook](#) – Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA)
- [The School Governance \(Roles Procedures and Allowances\) Regulations](#) – Legislation.gov.uk

The Clerk's Role in Recruitment, Appointment, Induction and Succession Planning

The clerk has an important role to play in the recruitment, appointment, induction and succession planning for members of the board.



Professional clerking supports the board to recruit, induct and train individuals with the right set of skills.

(Clerking Competency Framework)

Taking stock – self evaluation

A vacancy on the board is a good opportunity to look at governance in general. Does the current composition work? Are there sufficient people to deal with the workload, or does the board need to grow? Conversely there may be duplication between the committees and the full board, or insufficient opportunity for individuals to contribute their skills, knowledge and expertise, meaning that they do not feel valued. Perhaps the board is too big, or the way that the board and committees or lead governors and trustees work needs to be reconsidered. Are the meeting times accessible to all, or does it make it difficult for people to attend, which may restrict the search for new recruits? Does the board reflect the diversity of the school and local community? This is an important consideration in ensuring a balanced board. Has the board been carrying vacancies for some time, but the work is being appropriately and effectively dealt with? Perhaps rather than filling 'paper' vacancies the board should consider whether the size of the board needs to reduce (within statutory and constitutional limits).

The **Competency Framework for Governance** outlines the knowledge, skills and attributes which governors and trustees will use in fulfilling their role and provides a useful framework to help inform training and expectations.

A board skills audit becomes essential to the recruitment process and enables a real understanding of what the board needs. The **National Governance Association** (NGA) has published documents to help with the process of conducting a skills audit, one for stand-alone schools and one for federations and multi-academy trusts.

Recruitment

Responding to enquiries

The board needs to be professional in their approach to governor and trustee recruitment. The tone set through this process and contact with potential volunteers will generate their first impression of the setting and board. You may wish to consider a 'FAST' response to enquiries:

- F – friendly
- A – appreciative
- S – simple
- T – timely

Next steps

Once individuals have decided they are interested in joining the board the clerk will need a formal process for ensuring that they are the right candidate, with the relevant skills that the board is seeking at that time. It is certainly useful to ask the candidate to provide a pen portrait outlining their skills, why they would like to join the board and what they feel they would be able to contribute. If there are several candidates it may be more appropriate to use a common format for this statement, or an application form, so all the candidates are treated equally. Alternatively, the clerk could ask for a CV and a supporting statement. An example of what a 'vacancy' letter might look like for a parent governor vacancy is provided in the 'Useful Documents' section at the end of this handbook.

If there are several candidates it might be appropriate to have a short-listing meeting, where a small group of governors or trustees are delegated the responsibility to 'sift' the applications against the identified skills the board is seeking. They would recommend suitable candidates for the full board to consider and the board would make the decision on which one(s) to invite for interview or appoint, in line with the school's constitution or articles. The time frame for this process should be made clear to candidates and unsuccessful candidates should be informed prior to any appointment announcement being made publicly.



The membership of the board should focus on the skills required; therefore, the primary consideration in appointment decisions should be acquiring the skills, experience and diversity the board needs to be effective. A board composed of governors and academy trustees who bring a diverse range of skills, experiences, qualifications, characteristics and perspectives and who are from different backgrounds and settings will have a positive impact on setting the strategic direction for the organisation.

(The Governance Handbook)

The Clerk's Role in Recruitment, Appointment, Induction and Succession Planning continued

A formal record needs to be made of the appointment through the minutes. A formal letter should be sent to the new board member confirming their appointment, who they have been appointed by and their term of office, including their start date.

The new recruit will need to complete the relevant paperwork, including the Declaration of Eligibility, the Register of Business and Pecuniary Interests and undertake an enhanced DBS disclosure and Section 128 check. The relevant authorities will need to be informed of the new governor or trustees' appointment and the required information published on the school website and on [Get Information About Schools](#) (GIAS).

Induction

Practical information

A welcome letter could explain what the governor or trustee should expect as part of their induction:

- Information about and a contact point for their governor or trustee mentor and the clerk
- Full list of governors or trustees and contact information, including their category and which committee they are part of, or portfolio/lead governor responsibilities
- Calendar of board and committee meetings
- School website address and login details for the governor area (if appropriate)
- Map/plan/layout of the school and room numbers (if appropriate)
- School calendar and the most recent parents' newsletter, magazine or equivalent
- Information on training
- Instrument of Government (maintained schools)
- Articles of Association and Scheme of Delegation (academy schools).

This information should be accompanied by an invitation to the school to meet with the chair (or vice chair), headteacher and the clerk.

Meeting with the clerk

It is usual for the clerk to send an introductory email to new governors. An example of what a 'welcome' email might look like is provided in the 'Useful Documents' section at the end of this handbook.

A meeting with the clerk is useful to ensure that all the statutory paperwork is completed or in process appropriately, including an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check (within 21

days of appointment); statement of eligibility to serve; register of relevant business and pecuniary interests; information to be published on the school website and information for GIAS. The board may also like the new recruit to sign the Code of Conduct at this point and arrange the date for induction training. The clerk can explain the practical side of governance, such as how to get something onto the agenda; the annual cycle of work the board uses; the policies the board is responsible for and how these are dealt with; how to deal with expenses claims etc. The clerk can signpost to other areas of support which are available.

Succession planning

As a clerk you should support the board to ensure that effective succession planning is in place. The DfE's [Clerking Competency Framework](#) suggests that an effective clerk should understand: *"the importance of succession planning and can advise the board on expiry of an individual's term of office and the impact of this on the board's capacity and skills mix."*

There are a number of examples in the NCOGS document [Succession Breeds Success](#) on how governors and trustees can be encouraged to take an active part on the board and develop leadership skills to increase the availability of experienced and capable governors and trustees that are prepared to assume leadership roles such as chair and vice chair.

The suggestions in the document which the clerk can share with the board include:

- Review structures and ways of working to create opportunities for governors and trustees to take on additional responsibilities (e.g., committees, specific monitoring roles and working parties)
- Identify governors or trustees with the potential to become team leaders
- Enable shadowing of more experienced team leaders either on own board or other board
- Offer mentoring
- Encourage attendance at effective chairing or other relevant training
- Encourage governors or trustees with a moderate amount of experience to mentor new governors or trustees
- Facilitate meetings with relevant members of staff
- Provide opportunities to network with governors or trustees from other boards with similar responsibilities.

Where to look for information and resources for induction, recruitment, appointment and succession planning

- [National Governance Association](#) – Skills audit template and Code of Conduct
- [Succession Breeds Success](#) – National Coordinator of Governor Services (NCOGS)
- [Clerking Competency Framework](#) – Department for Education (DfE)
- [The Competency Framework for Governance](#) – Department for Education (DfE)
- [The Governance Handbook](#) – Department for Education (DfE)

Before the Meeting

Meetings of the full board must be held at least three times during the school year, although the majority of boards will be meeting more frequently than this. Meetings of the board are convened by the clerk, who must give written notice of the meeting and an agenda at least 7 days in advance, (14 days in some academy schools, as stipulated in the Articles of Association). An additional meeting of the full board can be requisitioned by any three governors or trustees, who must make the request in writing to the clerk and the clerk has a duty to convene such a meeting as soon as is reasonably practicable. The chair can also call an additional meeting.

Committee meetings are meetings of the formal committees set up by the board and are arranged as required. The clerk may take the minutes of these meetings if it forms part of their contract with the board. If the clerk does not attend the committee meetings, then a member of the committee (but not the headteacher) can minute the meeting. Each committee must have terms of reference detailing any delegated functions, agreed by the board annually.

Working parties which include governors or trustees may be set up for specific purposes and meet as required.

Timing

It is the clerk's duty to prepare and collate the necessary paperwork for a meeting of the board. The agenda must be circulated to the board at least 7 days before the date of the meeting with as much of the supporting documentation as possible. Some academy Articles state that the agenda must be distributed 14 days ahead of the meeting.

Setting the agenda

The clerk should consult with the chair of the board (or the chair of the committee) and the headteacher about the content of the agenda. Many clerks, headteachers and chairs meet to discuss the agenda and decide which items may be confidential and to agree which documents will need to be circulated in advance.

The agreed agenda must then be drawn up by the clerk. It is often helpful to have a template agenda, which can be added to, as there are some items which will feature regularly.

Check that any documentation referred to in the agenda is available. Circulate any documents which will be discussed with the agenda, or as soon after as possible. It is not good practice to table documents at the meeting; if this is unavoidable then reading time must be allowed.

Governors or trustees may ask to place a specific item on the agenda. They are entitled to do so but should have discussed the matter first with the chair. Boards should have a clear procedure in place for governors to put items on the agenda of any meeting. This avoids any misunderstanding.

The annual board cycle

It is extremely valuable to set up an annual cycle, showing both the statutory and non-statutory business to be conducted by the full board and any supporting committees through the academic year. This provides a template for agendas and ensures that all items are covered, examples of a cycle checklist for maintained schools and academies can be found in the 'Useful Documents' section at the end of this handbook.

The agenda

It is the duty of the clerk to circulate the agenda, together with papers (*excluding* confidential papers/minutes). Notice of the meeting, stating place, date and time of the meeting should be issued by the clerk.

Regular Agenda Items: (See detailed breakdown over the following pages.)

- **People present at the meeting** and in what capacity they are attending the meeting (e.g., governors or trustees, clerk, invited guests, members of the public)
- **Apologies for absence** and if these are sanctioned by the board (or committee)
- **Register of business/pecuniary interests.** This should be reviewed at the start of every meeting and any new or different interests declared, plus any potential conflict for an individual which may arise for an item on the agenda
- **Minutes of the previous meeting.** These need to be agreed by the board as an accurate account of that meeting and signed by the chair
- **Matters arising.** Any matters arising should have been previously identified and listed as a separate agenda item. If there are any additional items arising, not covered on the agenda, they can be discussed at this point
- **Actions from the previous meeting.** An update on progress towards any actions raised
- **Correspondence.** To determine action on correspondence received
- **Headteacher's report.** The board can ask questions relating to the report
- **Other reports.** The board can ask questions relating to reports from the Senior Leadership team (SLT), such as from the SENDCO (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Coordinator) a safeguarding report, or report from a subject lead
- **Committee reports.** To consider recommendations from committees and/or ask questions and to note action taken under delegated authority by headteacher, clerk/ committee/ chair/ other governors or trustees
- **Governor visits.** To ask questions regarding reports from governors or trustees who have visited the school
- **Monitoring and accountability.** To ask questions and raise challenge about progress made towards the objectives on the School Development/Improvement Plan
- **Policies for approval** (Please see 'Guide to Policies' later in this manual for further guidance on policies)
- **Governor training.** To receive reports from governors who have attended training and agree future training
- **Business brought forward by the chair.** This provides a slot for urgent business, which has arisen since the agenda was circulated, which needs to be discussed by, or notified to, the board. The agenda should not include a section for 'any other business', as this does not give governors or trustees the statutory notice of 7 days to consider items
- **Confidential items.** It is helpful to try to group confidential items together on the agenda if possible. Confidential items may require some governors or trustees to withdraw for the item, due to the nature of the item under discussion. If confidential items are towards the end of the agenda, anyone who needs to withdraw can leave the meeting at that point. Some of these may be items which arise from earlier items on

Before the Meeting continued

the agenda, in which case the board may resolve to move to confidential business earlier in the meeting. Confidential items are minuted separately to the main minutes (please see the chapter on 'After the Meeting' for further information on minutes)

- **Impact of this meeting.** A brief reflection on the impact that the meeting will have on outcomes for pupils
- **Next meeting.** Confirmation of the date and time of the next meeting.

Who should receive the agreed agenda?

For full board meetings all governors or trustees and the headteacher (if not a governor), should receive the agenda and documents. For committee meetings all the individuals who are part of the committee (including any associate members) should receive the agenda and documents. Documents may include the headteacher's report, committee reports, working party reports, policies for review and any other relevant items.

People present at the meeting

It is essential to have an accurate record of governors present and others in attendance (by name). The attendance of the headteacher must be noted if s/he is not a governor, as must that of the clerk as clerk to the board. It may also be useful to note governor or trustee categories and posts held (e.g., chair/vice chair). A table showing names, with initials, allows an easy reference point if initials are to be utilised in the minutes. If someone leaves the meeting before the end or withdraws for an agenda item this should also be noted.

Apologies for absence/approval of absence/the six month rule

The clerk needs to record those governors or trustees for whom apologies have been received. S/he also needs to record in the minutes of the meeting the names of those governors or trustees not present for whom consent for absence has been given by the board. If the board does not approve the absence, this must be noted, as governors or trustees (except ex officio governors in maintained schools) will be disqualified from membership of the board if absent from meetings without consent of the board for a continuous period of six months. In maintained schools the six month period starts from the date of the first board meeting that s/he missed without consent of the board. Non-attendance at committee meetings does not count in the calculation towards the six month rule. Where a governor is suspended, the period of his/her suspension does not count towards the six month rule.

A foundation governor, LA governor, representative governor, partnership governor or co-opted governor who has been disqualified under the six-month rule is not eligible for re-nomination or re-appointment as a governor of the same category at that school for the 12 months immediately following his/her disqualification.

In an academy the six month period includes all meetings missed. The model articles of association do not specify when the six-month period must start so trustees can decide to count from any time, including periods when no meetings are held at all. It is also worth noting that within academies the disqualification rules also apply to any member of any committee or delegate of the trustees, including a local governing body or committee, who is not a trustee.

Register of pecuniary interests and withdrawal from meetings

The clerk should become familiar with the requirements for governors or trustees to leave the meeting in some circumstances, where they have certain interests in the matter under discussion. Governors and trustees should be mindful that in exercising board functions, and as required in maintained schools by legislation and in academies by the Academies Financial Handbook, they must act with integrity, objectivity and honesty and in the best interests of the school; be open about the decisions they make and the actions they take and in particular should be prepared to explain their decisions and actions to interested parties.

If a governor or trustee leaves a meeting their withdrawal and return should be minuted.

CLERKING IN ACTION...



Declaration of Interest Checklist

The following checklist is a useful base to start when supporting a governor/trustee to consider whether or not they should declare an interest in an item under discussion. The individual should ask themselves:

1. Is there a possibility that I, or a relative, may benefit or lose out from the decision on this issue?
2. Could an outsider have a reasonable doubt about my impartiality because of private information I have received or because of personal or business contacts which I may have?
3. If I am employed at the school (but not the headteacher), is the pay or performance management of a fellow employee due to be discussed?

If the answer to any of these questions is "Yes", they should declare an interest in the item to be considered. If they answer "Yes" to either question 1 or question 3, they should also withdraw from the meeting for that item.

If they answer "Yes" to question 2, they would be advised, but not required, to withdraw from the meeting for that item.

The background to the checklist comes from two areas, firstly the "Seven Principles of Public Life" set out by the Nolan Committee and secondly, The School Governance (Procedures) (England) Regulations.

Minutes of the previous meeting

It is not good practice to first circulate draft minutes with the agenda for the following meeting, as this does not allow time for action points to be addressed between meetings. It is good practice to clearly record 'actions' within the minutes and/or on a separate 'actions table', recording the name of the governor or trustee who agreed to do a certain task and the timeframe for completion, thus enabling governors or trustees to see clearly anything they were asked to do by the board in time for actions to be completed prior to the next meeting.

Correspondence

Most of the communication to the board comes to the chair of governors or via the headteacher to the chair or to the clerk. The clerk may receive letters to circulate to governors or trustees. The clerk should try to do this as soon as possible after receiving them rather than waiting until the next meeting of the full board.

Before the Meeting continued

It is well worth working out a system for dealing with correspondence with the chair: e.g., listing and numbering correspondence; making sure there is someone who will read through it and point out where action may be required.

Matters in relation to appointments and resignations of governors or trustees are entirely for the clerk to deal with.

A clerk may be asked to write letters on behalf of the board which have been drafted by the chair or another governor or trustee.

Headteacher's report

There may be matters to be discussed, questions to be asked, recommendations to consider or decisions to be taken arising out of the headteacher's report. Each item to be decided upon should be recorded under its own subject heading. A copy of this report will need to be kept with the minutes to facilitate referral to it from within the minutes.

A clear understanding of, and distinction between, the role of the board and the headteacher is crucial to effective governance. The regulations make clear that the headteacher is responsible for the educational performance of the school and for the internal organisation, management and control of the school – which includes the performance management of staff. The board's role is to hold the headteacher to account for exercising their professional judgement in these matters and for the performance of all of their other duties. Having advised the board, the headteacher must comply with any reasonable direction given by it.

To create robust accountability, governors and trustees need to ask challenging questions on the basis of robust objective data. As explained in **The Governance Handbook**, from the Department for Education, governors or trustees should not just rely on information provided by the headteacher. Rather, they should scrutinise objective national data at least once a year; use visits to verify what they are told and ensure the headteacher's termly report provides appropriate and sufficiently detailed information. The Governance Handbook provides prompts on the range of topics on which the board may need to ask questions. It is the headteacher's job (and in maintained schools it is their legal duty) to give boards all the information they need to do their job well. This means they should help boards access the data published by the Department for Education and Ofsted. They should also regularly provide whatever management information the board requires to monitor different aspects of life in the school throughout the year. In particular, boards will need to see information relating to the priorities they have identified for improvement within the School Development or Improvement Plan. This might include data on pupil learning and progress, pupil applications, admissions, attendance and exclusions, staff absence, recruitment, retention, morale and performance and the effectiveness of the curriculum.

Boards, not headteachers, should determine the scope and format of headteacher's termly reports. This will mean that governors or trustees receive the information they need in a format that enables them to stay focused on their core strategic functions and not get distracted or overwhelmed by information of secondary importance. The headteacher may delegate areas within the report to other members of staff to compile.

Committee reports

Reports (and/or minutes) from meetings of the formal committees set up by the board. The clerk may record the minutes of these meetings if it forms part of their contract. If the clerk is not clerking

the meeting it can be useful to have a pro forma for minute taking, so that information is received in a consistent format.

Try to avoid committee chairs feeding back to the board by reading out the committee minutes. This should be an opportunity to ask questions, be updated on any delegated functions carried out by the committee and to act on any recommendations from the committee. Each item to be decided upon should be recorded under its own subject heading.

Visits

Reports from governors or trustees who have been into school for a visit are often recorded via a feedback or visit report sheet. This provides an opportunity to remind governors or trustees about forthcoming visits and/or set up a cycle of visits. Governor and trustee visits can provide good evidence for Ofsted that the board is fulfilling their monitoring role. The board can ask questions about the visit and may need to consider recommendations raised through the visit.

Governor training

A training record should be maintained for members of the board, which the clerk may be asked to keep. This agenda item provides an opportunity to feedback on and share information from recent training activities. Many boards will have an evaluation sheet for governors or trustees to complete relating to training they have undertaken. Some boards have a training session within meetings or schedule a meeting just for training.

Business brought forward by the chair

Urgent items of business should be notified to the chair to be dealt with under 'items brought forward by the chair' if appropriate. Items of regular business, such as committee reports, should not be included under this heading. It is strictly for the chair to report any action s/he may have taken on urgent matters for which a place has not been allotted elsewhere on the agenda. It is not a forum for 'Any Other Business', which should not appear on board or committee agendas.

Date and time of next meeting

Most boards will set up the cycle of meetings in advance for the full academic year, so everyone can put them in their diaries. Occasionally it may be necessary to hold additional meetings, for example pre or post Ofsted, or if there are changes happening, such as federation, moving to academy status or recruiting a headteacher. If a clerk is required to clerk extra meetings, s/he should keep a note of the hours involved and highlight any concerns that they may have that it will take them over their contracted hours. It is useful to remind governors and trustees of the committee meeting dates in addition to the next full board meeting date.

Setting out the agenda

It is valuable for governors and trustees to know what to expect within agenda items. As well as listing the item it is useful to have additional columns where the person who will lead on the item is identified; any comments and a note of any relevant documents which governors or trustees will need to read before the meeting. Many boards also group agenda items together as 'procedural'; 'strategic'; 'for information'; 'monitoring and accountability'. Boards may also time their agendas, so each item has a guide to the length of time allocated for discussion of that item. Examples of agendas can be found in the 'Useful Documents' section at the end of this handbook.

During the Meeting

Meetings can go on for a couple of hours, occasionally longer so the clerk needs to ensure that they are as comfortable as possible. It is helpful to sit next to the chair if possible and working at a table is easier particularly if using a laptop or similar device to record the minutes.

Relationship with the chair

Different chairs will have different expectations of their clerk. It is important to clarify with the chair at an early stage what they require of the clerk at the meeting. Some will prefer the clerk to contribute to the meeting pro-actively, others will invite the clerk to give advice during the meeting.

Know who to expect

A copy of the Instrument of Government sets out the structure and membership of the board of a maintained school. This should be available from the school or from the Local Authority Governor Services Team. In an Academy, the details of membership will be given in the Articles of Association.

New members

If there are new governors or trustees attending their first meeting, ensure that they are introduced to the chair (if they have not previously met) and other members of the board. The clerk may be expected to support new board members by providing induction and this should be clarified with the chair.

Checking who is in the meeting

Using a copy of the constitution list, identify individuals in the room. (Some clerks find it helpful to take nameplates to physical meetings until they know the governors or trustees). This is important for physical and virtual meetings as should there be any confidential items individuals may need to withdraw from the meeting.

Register of pecuniary interests and withdrawal from meetings

Governors or trustees must declare pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests and the board should decide whether this represents a conflict such that the governor or trustee should withdraw from discussion and/or decision making. Governors or trustees should declare any interests on the Register of Business Interests Form.

Associate members may be excluded from any part of a meeting where the item of business concerns an individual member of staff or pupil. A governor or trustee must withdraw where there is a conflict of interest between the individual governor or trustee and the board, or where there is any reasonable doubt about their ability to act impartially in relation to any matter.

Withdrawal of members of staff

It is not permissible for a member of the school staff to be present at meetings considering the appointment of his or her successor. School staff (with the exception of the headteacher) must also withdraw if the pay or performance of a member of staff is being discussed.

Where there is a dispute as to whether a relevant person is required to withdraw from a meeting and/or not vote on an agenda item, this question will be determined by the other members of the board present at the meeting.

CLERKING IN ACTION...



Scenario - Conflicts of interest

Under the agenda item Headteacher Performance Management, the governing board begin to discuss the headteacher's pay. The clerk lets the governing board know that the headteacher and governors who are staff (this includes staff who are co-opted governors as well as the staff governor) must leave the meeting as they have a conflict of interest. The chair realises that should the staff leave, the meeting would be inquorate and lets the clerk know that governors are happy for them to remain for the item. What would you do?

It is not an option, as it is with other potential conflicts of interests, for the governing board to determine if the conflict is such that staff should leave the meeting. Staff are not eligible to remain for a discussion which includes the pay of a member of staff. If the meeting would become inquorate, the clerk should advise the board that the discussion would need to be deferred and to be an agenda item for a meeting of the pay committee, another committee with delegated powers to agree the headteacher's pay or a future meeting of the governing board.

Governing board constitution

For maintained schools refer to the **School Governance Regulations** when answering questions about possible changes in membership (Appendix B of the statutory guidance is particularly useful) to refer to the different types of school.

For maintained schools, if there is a new local authority governor nominated, the board will need to record their agreement to the appointment in the minutes. The board can appoint co-opted governors based on the skills they bring to the board.

Arrangements for the appointment of trustees on a trust board will be given in the Articles of Association and for governors on a local governing body (LGB) within a multi-academy trust (MAT) within the Scheme of Delegation.

Quorum

Ensure that there are sufficient governors or trustees present for decisions to be made at the meeting.

A quorum for the full board in a maintained school is a minimum of 50% of the governors in post (ignore any vacancies on the governing board for the purposes of the calculation, for example, if their constitution is 10 but there are 2 vacancies, the quorum will be 4). For committees the quorum should be stated in the terms of reference (generally 3).

The quorum for an Academy Trust Board will be given in the Articles of Association and for committees in the terms of reference.

If there are insufficient governors or trustees present discussion can still take place, but the meeting will need to be re-arranged for any decisions to be taken.

During the Meeting continued

CLERKING IN ACTION...



Scenario - Quorum for a full board meeting in a maintained school

The Instrument of Government for the governing board meeting you are clerking regulates places for 12 governors in total. There are only five governors present at the meeting (including the headteacher). You know that there must be 50% of governors in post present at the meeting for it to be quorate. Do you continue with the meeting?

Yes No Don't know

Answer – Don't know. Before determining whether the meeting was quorate you would need to know how many vacancies there are on the governing board. The 50% rule is for governors in post. If there were two or more vacancies on the board the meeting would be quorate; if not the meeting could continue for discussion only, but no decisions could be made if a quorum was not present.

Voting

The clerk may need to remind all present of the eligibility of those present to vote on issues. In maintained schools, governors are not permitted to vote by proxy and must be present to take part in any vote. Governance procedures regulations allow boards to approve alternative arrangements for governors to participate in or vote at meetings, including, but not limited to, via telephone or video conference. This can extend to their committees.

Academy schools have the option to offer voting by proxy as defined in the Articles and will have provision to meet by telephone or video conference. See 'The Clerk's Role in Virtual Meetings' later in this handbook.

Regular items on the agenda were detailed in the section dealing with action before the meeting, however the following occasional items should be considered too.

Election of chair and vice chair

Election of the chair and or vice chair must be an agenda item and depending on the arrangements determined by the board, names of potential candidates may be included on the agenda or nominations may be accepted at the meeting. The clerk will be aware of the arrangements for their board from the agenda planning process. When the election of the chair is considered, the clerk takes over the meeting. All candidates leave the room and the remaining governors or trustees vote. If there is only one candidate, governors or trustees do not have to elect that person. If there are insufficient votes to appoint the one candidate, the governors or trustees will have to elect a person from the board to chair that meeting and a further election will need to be held at the next meeting.

The process is repeated for the election of vice chair, but the chair will take the item rather than the clerk.

It is for the board to determine the method of voting, some boards will be happy with a show of hands, others will prefer a secret ballot.

If an election is on the agenda, it is recommended that the clerk has a supply of slips of paper for the governors or trustees to write the name of their preferred candidate. If there is a secret ballot, the clerk will usually count the votes and declare the result to the board. The clerk will then invite the candidates back into the room

and invite the successful candidate to take the chair. The election process is explained in further detail below. If the meeting is being held virtually alternative voting arrangements may be needed, see the section on virtual meetings.

Items not on the agenda

An item for any other business (AOB) may be included on the agenda you inherit when commencing your clerking role, however, there is a view that AOB is not good practice and it certainly should not be used to gain agreement on important issues or to get issues agreed in the absence of, or without the knowledge of, certain governors or trustees.

There are certain matters which can only be considered if on the formal agenda such as:

- A decision to serve notice of discontinuance of the school
- A decision to change the name of the school
- Consideration of the report on the proposal to federate
- The decision to convert to an academy
- The removal of the chair or vice chair from office
- The suspension of any governor.

Offering advice and guidance

In terms of procedural advice, it is important that the clerk is familiar with the **School Governance Roles, Procedures and Allowances Regulations 2013** and refers to this when guiding the governing board of a maintained school.

If at a meeting of an academy trust board or committee, the clerk will need to refer to the **Articles of Association** for the Trust for guidance on any procedural issues. Local governing bodies/committees (LGB) will operate within the responsibilities delegated to them by the trust board through the agreed **Scheme of Delegation**. This will set out what has been delegated to the LGB and on what basis.

In terms of guidance on topics being discussed, the clerk is not expected to know the regulations relating to every aspect of the business being discussed but should be able to signpost governors or trustees to the appropriate source of support. For example, if a staff restructure is proposed, then HR advice should be sought from the HR provider engaged by the school.

The clerk should intervene if necessary to advise the board and the chair regarding potential conflicts of interest, when matters may need to be discussed confidentially, whether the meeting is quorate and if decision making has been delegated to the committee or LGB where an item is under discussion.

The process of election of the chair

Every board must elect a chair. This is laid down in statute for maintained schools in Regulation 7 of **The School Governance (Roles, Procedures and Allowances) (England) Regulations 2013** and in the model articles of association for academy trusts. There is, however, no direction as to how the elections should take place.

Eligibility to stand

In maintained schools and academies those not eligible to stand as chair or vice chair are:

- a governor who is employed at the school as a teacher or as any other member of the school's staff
- an associate member.

During the Meeting continued

The definition of 'employed at the school' can be taken as anyone who has a contract of employment with the school. Anyone who provides services to the school which is not under a contract (even a zero hour's contract) would not be classed as being employed at the school but would have to record the work in the declaration of interests.

Frequency of elections

In a maintained school, this can vary. It is for the governing body of a maintained school to determine the term of office for the chair which determines the frequency of elections. The term of office does not have to be given as a number of years but could for example be until the first meeting of the autumn term.

In an academy the model articles of association state that the chair should be elected annually.

Term of office of the chair

In maintained schools the clerk will need to record the length of the term of office for the chair and ensure that there is an agenda item for an election when the term of office is due to end. In practice it can be helpful to have the election of chair as an annual item even if the term of office is greater than this. The governing board can then be reminded when the last election took place and how long the term of office is for. This should then help the board with succession planning. Many maintained school governing boards consider it good practice to give a one year term of office to the chair as things can change very quickly. A discussion can then be had after this time as to whether the chair feels that it is still the right role for them and for the governing body to determine if they are still the right governor for the role.

It is recommended in the DfE's **Governance Handbook** that strong chairs should consider moving on to another school or academy trust after a reasonable time (e.g. two terms of office, eight years).

It is recommended that a chair of governors or trustees begins to think about succession planning as soon as they are appointed. They should ensure other governors or trustees, particularly the vice-chair, are aware of what the role involves and give them the opportunity to be involved in developmental activities. Prior to the meeting at which the election of chair is to be determined, the board should have discussed what is expected from the chair of governors or chair of trustees and any training and development that is available.

Procedure for the election of the chair

It is for the board to determine the process by which the chair is appointed unless this is stipulated in the specific articles of association for the academy trust; there is no process determined in the model articles. As the clerk will be leading the election of the chair the clerk should help the board to determine the procedure.

Election process

The board may determine that:

- Those wishing to stand as chair must advise the clerk prior to the meeting
- If nominations are forwarded to the clerk prior to the meeting candidates may be asked to give a brief overview of what contribution they feel they can bring to the role of chair
- Nominations are taken at the meeting
- Both prior nominations and those given at the meeting will be considered
- Those wishing to stand may be asked to self-nominate
- Nominations are made by other governors or trustees.

Agree the term of office for the chair

Prior to the election the board must determine the term of office for the chair as outlined above, ensuring that the candidates' terms of office as a governor extend for that period. They will not be eligible to remain as chair should their term of office end.

Agenda item

The election of the chair must be an agenda item. As the clerk will need to chair the meeting for this item, it is suggested that it is one of the first agenda items after apologies have been given and declarations of interests recorded.

Nominations

The clerk should inform the board of the nominations received by the method approved by the board. If candidates have been asked to provide a written statement these can be circulated prior to the meeting for the meeting or read out at the meeting by the candidates themselves or by the clerk. The board may then be asked if they have any questions for the candidates. Once the board has received the information it needs, the candidates must be asked to leave the meeting. **The candidate must leave the meeting even if they are the only one nominated.** Governors or trustees can leave virtual meetings by being assigned to waiting rooms.

Deliberation and vote

The board should then deliberate either the respective strengths of those who have been nominated, or whether the one candidate nominated has the skills and experience needed by the board for the role of chair. Once the deliberation has taken place the clerk should provide the means for a secret ballot.

At face to face meetings, it is usual practice for the clerk to provide slips of paper on which each governor or trustee writes the name of one of the candidates then folds up the paper. If there is only one candidate governors or trustees should be asked to write 'accept' if they are of the opinion that the candidate is suitable to take on the role of chair, or 'decline' if they believe that they do not currently have the skills and experience required by the board.

At virtual meetings, many platforms have the facility for a secret vote to take place through a poll. The clerk should set this up if available.

The clerk should then count the votes and inform the board as to the name of the successful candidate or that no chair has been elected. If there are an equal number of votes the clerk could suggest that the candidates are asked to return to the room in order that governors or trustees can ask further questions. If the votes remain as a tie the outcome can be decided by the toss of a coin.

Those that have left the meeting should be asked to re-join the meeting and the clerk should let them know whether there is a successful candidate and who that is. Neither the candidates nor the board should be informed of the number of votes for or against.

If a new chair has been elected, they would take over chairing the meeting at this point.

If no chair is elected the vice chair should continue to act as chair until the next meeting. If there is no vice chair, the board should elect a governor to chair the meeting.

During the Meeting continued

CLERKING IN ACTION...



Scenario – no governors or trustees stand for the position of chair

The clerk should remind the board that it is a statutory duty to elect a chair and make arrangements to find suitable nominations for the next meeting. This could include:

- Asking all governors, particularly those already in a leadership role such as vice chair or chair of a committee, to review their capacity to take on the role
- Consider advertising specifically for a chair. This can be done through Inspiring Governance or your local authority might have experienced chairs or local leaders of governance who would be willing to take on the role
- Consider sharing the work by appointing co-chairs: *“It is possible to appoint more than one person to share the role of chair, or similarly the role of vice chair, if the board believes this is necessary and in the best interests of the school. The board would need to ensure that any role-sharing arrangement does not lead to a loss of clarity in its leadership”.* (**Governance Handbook**)

In any co-chair model communication is the key to making it work, with a clear definition of which co-chair is responsible for which area. Boards will firstly need to agree that they are happy to adopt a co-chair model and be satisfied that it would not lead to any lack of clarity in leadership. The headteacher/principal, governors or trustees and clerk will need to know which individual is leading on each area and who they should contact.

The vice chair

There is much information available about the role of the chair, with a model role description from the National Governance Association, sections within the Competency Framework for Governance detailing the knowledge, skills and behaviours they feel the chair should demonstrate and paragraphs within the Governance Handbook outlining the responsibilities of the chair. The vice chair role is not so clearly defined; other than the expectation that the vice chair will step in to run meetings in the absence of the chair. Clerks need to consider what the role entails in their own setting and when the board holds the election for the office of the chair and the vice chair whether there are clear parameters in place for what people are being asked to do if they take on one of those positions. If a board operates with co-chairs the vice chair role may become even more nebulous. Boards should consider whether they are making the most of their vice chairs and utilising their time, commitment and skills to lighten the load for the chair and contribute to the efficient working of the board.

Boards should review the chairs' responsibilities and workload to consider if there are any aspects which the vice chair could take on. Within full board meetings perhaps the vice chair could lead on some of the agenda items on a regular basis, giving the chair an opportunity to contribute fully to the discussions for those items as a member of the board, or chair the whole meeting once a term. The vice chair could also contribute to the agenda setting process, working collaboratively with the chair, headteacher and clerk, to help ensure that nothing is missed, and the purpose of the agenda items is clear (and strategic).

In some boards the vice chair is considered to be a natural step on the route to potentially becoming the chair of the board at some

point in the future. If this is the expectation the board needs to ensure that the vice chair is aware of it and offer opportunities for them to develop, perhaps by attending appropriate training alongside the current chair. They could perhaps shadow the chair, joining conversations, briefings and meetings that the chair participates in, helping to build their knowledge and professional relationships with key stakeholders.

The vice chair could be responsible for board development, working with the clerk to conduct a regular skills audit and using the findings from this audit both to help develop a training programme for the board and to inform the recruitment process. The vice chair may be the person who has conversations with individual governors about governance in the setting, identifying what has gone well and what could be improved, or they may work with the chair as a sounding board for the chair's own self-evaluation. The vice chair might lead on the induction process for new governors or trustees, ensuring that they have a friendly contact within the board and touching base with them regularly to make sure all is going well and new recruits are not feeling either overwhelmed or underused. In addition to supporting new members of the board the vice-chair could be a mentor for individuals who are taking on additional responsibility for the first time.

The board may have an expectation that the vice chair will take on a lead role reporting to the board, such as safeguarding, or pupil premium champion. Further, they may be expected to chair a committee, be part of the headteacher's appraisal panel or sit on the pay and performance committee. The vice chair could lead on parental and staff engagement, analysing the results of the boards' annual questionnaire to their stakeholders and suggesting strategies for the board to consider in order to address any issues identified.

Succession planning is another area that the vice chair could be asked to consider; much is said about the importance of succession planning, but unless someone takes responsibility for this area it is unlikely to happen. Boards will need to consider where the next governors or trustees will come from; who will chair the resources committee when the current committee chair retires; who will have the knowledge and skills to interrogate data or finance if the current individual leaves the board? The vice chair could have a positive impact on the effectiveness of the board by considering if the governance structure currently in place is fit for purpose, working with the clerk to suggest other ways the board could work to be more strategic or avoid duplication.

CLERKING IN ACTION...



Succession Planning

The clerk will need to keep an eye on the terms of office for individuals serving on the board in order to help the board to plan ahead. If an existing chair, vice chair or committee chair is nearing the end of their current term of office are they intending to stand for a further term, or are they likely to step down? Try to plan about three months ahead, to give the individual time to consider what they wish to do and to carry out a recruitment process if needed.

If your chair or vice chair is an elected parent governor there is no guarantee that they will be re-elected, so the board may need to consider if there is an alternative suitable vacancy available, so the individual could be appointed on the basis of their skills.

After the Meeting

It is a statutory duty for the clerk to ensure that minutes of every board meeting and any committees are drawn up. There is no statutory guidance as to the format or content of minutes, therefore the following information is taken from a variety of sources on good practice in minutes taking.

Maintained Schools: *"The clerk to the governing body (or the person appointed to act as clerk for the purpose of the meeting in accordance with regulation 10(3)) must ensure that minutes of the proceedings of a meeting of the governing body are drawn up and signed (subject to the approval of the governing body) by the chair at the next meeting"*

The School Governance (Roles, Procedures and Allowances) (England) Regulations 2013

Academies: *"The minutes of the proceedings of a meeting of the Trustees shall be drawn up and entered into a book kept for the purpose by the person acting as clerk for the purposes of the meeting; and shall be signed (subject to the approval of the Trustees) at the same or next subsequent meeting by the person acting as chairman thereof."*

Model articles of association for academy trusts

The purpose of minutes

Minutes of meetings of governance boards provide a permanent record of the work of the board. The signed copy of the minutes and any other documents referenced directly in the minutes should be kept permanently. They are important evidence for the public of how the board is carrying out its statutory duties and fulfilling its three core functions.

Ofsted inspectors frequently look at governing board minutes during an inspection to evidence the effectiveness of the board. Minutes record decisions made by the board and the rationale behind the decision; they also give those who did not attend details of what was agreed in their absence. The Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS) places responsibilities on the clerk for recording specific decisions in maintained schools. Minutes may on rare occasions be used in litigation.

Governors and trustees will refer to the minutes prior to the next meeting as a reminder of the previous discussions and decisions and to ensure that any actions arising have been followed up.

Minutes should therefore be:

- Accurate, giving a true record of what occurred
- Clear and unambiguous, so that they are not open to differing interpretation
- Provide a clear record of board decisions and agreed actions
- A concise, succinct summary of discussions
- Evidence of governors' or trustees' challenge and monitoring; ideally triangulation of evidence (first hand, school, external)
- Evidence that boards have fulfilled their statutory responsibilities
- An ongoing record of the business of a board.

Good practice guidelines

During the meeting the clerk will have made a record of the proceedings. This could have been by:

- Notes, using pen and paper
- Note-taking software
- Dictaphone or a recording app.

However the meeting was recorded the clerk should make sure they are aware of their responsibilities under the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). As a rule, any recording of the meeting should be destroyed once the final minutes are approved by the board.

The clerk should endeavour to type up the minutes from their notes/recording as soon as possible after the meeting whilst the proceedings are still clear in their mind.

Using a template

It is advisable to use a template for the minutes to promote consistency. The clerk may be given a preferred template by the board or be free to use one of their own choice. The majority of templates are in table format and should include the following:

- A heading with the name of the board or committee and the date and time of the meeting
- A section of those who were present (governors/trustees only) listed alphabetically and identifying the chair and the headteacher
- A section to list to list those who were in attendance; this would include associate members and the clerk. Those in attendance should be identified by name, office or role and where they are from.

The remainder of the template should include rows and/or columns for the number of the minute, resolutions or decisions made and follow up actions. Examples of minutes can be found in the 'Useful Documents' section later in this handbook.

Using the agenda

Each minute should relate directly to an agenda item through both a numbering system and the title of the minute. For example:

- 1. Apologies** - if this is the item on the agenda this should be mirrored in the minutes.

If the agenda item is particularly lengthy it may be useful to have numbered sub-sections (for example 1.1, 1.2 etc.) for ease of reference.

If the board agrees to take items out of order the clerk can record that decision but still use the numbering according to the agenda for accurate referencing.

The agenda and minutes should have a number of standing items including:

- Apologies
- Declarations of interests
- Approval of minutes from the last meeting
- Matters arising from the previous meeting/update on action points
- Consideration of minutes of any committee meetings
- Discussion and approval of policies and review dates
- Calendar of meeting dates for the board and committees.

These are usually reported quite briefly in the minutes, allowing the bulk of the minutes to reflect how the board has carried out its core functions of setting the strategic direction, ensuring financial probity and holding the executive leadership to account for education performance and performance management of staff.

After the Meeting continued



Professional clerking informs the board's accountability to others through minutes that provide evidence of challenge and scrutiny of the executive and the board's overall ability and capacity to govern the organisation well.

(Clerking Competency Framework)

Good practice guidelines for writing minutes

The board may have a preferred style of minutes which the clerk should follow. There are however a number of good practice guidelines for minutes including:

- Ensure that the minutes are factual and do not convey the opinion of the clerk
- Ensure that the style of writing is suitable for public scrutiny
- Write in plain English giving a clear and concise summary of discussions
- When using acronyms or abbreviations ensure that these are written out in full the first time they are used with the acronym or abbreviation in brackets
- Use reported speech. Write in the past tense in the third person, for example: *"The headteacher reported that there had been a three percent rise in attendance in the current term compared to the same period last year"*
- Use numbered headings and subheadings to assist clarity
- Use full sentences. However, if a discussion is lengthy and complex the issues may be summarised using bullet points (for example: *'Among the issues raised in the discussion were:'* followed by bullet points)
- Governors and trustees are corporately responsible, therefore individual names should not be used unless there is an action assigned to a particular governor or trustee
- Use active and specific phrases rather than passive phrases. The active voice is more direct and easily understood; it means identifying the person before the action. For example: *"The chair assured the headteacher that..."* rather than *"Assurances were given by the chair to the headteacher"*.

CLERKING IN ACTION...

Once the meeting is finished the minutes provide an important record of the discussion, decisions, questions, challenge and actions which took place at the meeting. Agenda setting and minute taking will take up a great deal of your clerking time - don't underestimate how long it can take (particularly in the early days) to put together a good set of minutes. Do work with your chair and ask them to sum up agenda items during the meeting, and make sure they draw your attention anything it is important to include. Don't be afraid to ask 'could you please clarify what you would like me to record in the minutes?'



Structuring the minutes from the meeting notes or recording

The minutes should not be a verbatim account of the meeting itself. For example, governors or trustees may return to an agenda item later in the meeting. All relevant discussion related to an agenda item should be recorded under that agenda item and not when it occurred in the meeting.

Key points in regard to the discussion should be noted and any final resolution clearly minuted. The decision could be in bold at the end of the item or in a separate box at the end or at the side of the item. The clerk needs to assure themselves that the minutes accurately reflect the meeting and give anyone who was not at the meeting the information they need.

Recording documents presented at the meeting

The clerk needs to ensure that all reports and other documents discussed at the meeting are accurately recorded as these, along with the minutes of the meeting, become public documents once the minutes are approved. The minutes should also indicate whether governors or trustees received the reports in advance or whether they were tabled at the meeting.

Confidential minutes

Confidential items should be used sparingly. Governance business is intended to be open and transparent. Board minutes (once approved) and headteachers' reports are public documents. If personal or sensitive matters are discussed at a meeting and governors or trustees request these matters to be recorded confidentially, they should be informed that schools are subject to the Freedom of Information Act. This means that minutes of boards are covered by the definition of 'recorded information'. The minutes must be considered for disclosure under the Act whenever they are either directly requested or contain information of the nature described in a request.

Marking a minute confidential does not exempt it from disclosure under the Act; however, there are other exemptions which may apply which means that the information may not need to be disclosed. For example, information about a pupil is unlikely to be disclosed under the Act because of the 'personal information' exemption. However, this exemption would not necessarily apply to information about the duties of an employee (for example the headteacher's objectives).

Also, individuals have a right to request all information held about them under the Data Protection Act. Therefore, any recorded information from which they can be identified must be disclosed on written request unless exempt. As with the Freedom of Information Act, marking the minutes 'confidential' does not exempt such information from disclosure to the individual in question although there may be other exemptions which can be relied on in legitimate circumstances.

If a confidential minute is requested, it should be recorded on separate pages entitled 'Confidential minutes of the meeting held on x.' It is often possible to avoid having to make a confidential minute by careful wording which does not identify individuals.

After the Meeting continued

CLERKING IN ACTION...



Scenario – Confidential Minutes

Governors/trustees' business is basically intended to be open. Governors/trustees should not make minutes confidential simply because the items discussed are contentious. There should be few occasions when confidentiality is required, since governing boards are tasked with acting strategically and should not need to discuss individual pupils or members of staff. However, from time to time, a governing board may need to discuss an agenda item under conditions of confidentiality. These discussions will be recorded as confidential minutes.

Valid examples of this might be:

- Matters relating to staff performance and pay
- Sensitive information relating to the school which is not ready for public eyes
- Formal proceedings, such as an appeal hearing or panel meeting relating to an exclusion or parental complaint.

As the clerk you have a key role to play in advising the governing board which matters should be deemed confidential and which do not. The main body of the minutes at the relevant item should minute that the board agreed to discuss the item under confidential business. It is good practice to use a coloured sheet for the confidential page as this then stands out and is less likely to be accidentally published to the public. Part two minutes should be stored separately, where they cannot be accidentally accessed and should be password protected and/or encrypted if stored/sent electronically.



A sound understanding of the board's duties and responsibilities; governance legislation and procedures; and the wider context in which the board is operating will enable the clerk to make an important contribution to the effectiveness of the board. It will result in better quality advice on legal and procedural matters related to governance; make for more accurate recording of discussions and decisions; and enable more efficient use of the board's time.

(Clerking Competency Framework)

Useful words for minutes

Clerks may often find themselves using the same word over and over again, it is worth considering the many options for reporting the discussion that takes place. Below is a table indicating words that may offer an alternative:

discussed debated deliberated considered examined analysed	existence of issue of reality of topic of problem of question of	said stated reported established confirmed added commented verified declared pointed out explained acknowledged suggested described advised highlighted drew attention to outlined understood raised informed reminded recalled emphasised clarified illustrated defined demonstrated indicated	potential possibility likelihood prospect chance
planned intended meant hoped proposed	options alternatives choice preference opportunity		problems drawbacks dangers uncertainties disadvantages
disagreed disputed not the case	benefits of merits of advantages of worth value of		chose opted selected picked named preferred
agreed concurred			
worried concerned troubled uneasy anxious apprehensive	decided resolved approved concluded determined		

Circulation of the draft minutes

The draft minutes should be circulated to the chair (and the headteacher) as soon as possible after the meeting, good practice would be within seven days of the meeting. Initial approval of the minutes should be sought from the chair prior to circulation to all governors. The chair is responsible for the factual accuracy of the minutes, they should not change or add information to suit their personal views. The board will be given the opportunity to make any other amendments at the next meeting before they are signed off as a correct record. If the board has agreed, they could also be published on the school website at this point, marked as 'draft' minutes.

Signing the minutes

The minutes will be signed by the chair, or committee chair, as being agreed by the board (committee). The pages of the minutes should be numbered with a space for the chair to sign on every page.

Filing

The signed copy of the minutes must be kept indefinitely. They must be held at the school for a period of six years, after which they can be sent to archive.

Statutory Committees for Formal Proceedings

Formal proceedings include consideration of whether an excluded pupil should be reinstated, a complaint appeal where the complaint remains unresolved by the school, admissions appeals and HR procedures, such as redundancy or dismissal. You will often hear committees delegated to deal with formal proceedings of this nature referred to as the 'First' Committee and 'Second' or 'Appeals' Committee.

These statutory (or standing) committees are established by the board but will only meet as and when the need arises. The board must appoint a clerk to each of the above named committees, who should not be a governor or a trustee.

A committee of the board is set up with delegated powers, with the board deciding its membership, the procedures for selecting its chair, what powers it will have, whether it will include associate members and if so, whether they may vote. This information must be minuted at a full board meeting and recorded in Terms of Reference for each committee. The establishment, terms of reference, constitution and membership of committees must be reviewed annually. It is helpful to have a 'pool' of governors or trustees available for the standing committees, as they often need to meet within an identified timeline to meet statutory obligations and individuals who are part of the committee must have no prior knowledge of the event or issue under consideration. Members of staff are not eligible to be part of committees for formal proceedings. Anyone with an actual or perceived conflict of interest should also not take part.

The 'first committee' will convene:

- To make any initial decision relating to staff conduct, capability or a grievance (where this has not been delegated to the headteacher)
- To make a decision to suspend a member of staff (where this has not been delegated to the headteacher)
- To make a decision to dismiss a member of staff
- To make initial decisions in respect of staff redundancies
- To make any other initial decisions as are needed in respect of any staffing/HR procedures which are not covered by the Terms of Reference for the Resources Committee.

The 'second' or 'appeals committee' will convene:

- To hear an appeal against any decision made by the headteacher or any other committee of the board
- To hear a complaint in accordance with the school's complaints policy where this has not been resolved at a previous stage
- To consider the decision of the headteacher to exclude a child/pupil from the school in accordance with the regulations governing exclusion
- In a voluntary aided, foundation school or academy, where the board is responsible for the school's admissions, governors or trustees may also need to sit on an appeal committee to hear an admission appeal.



Clerks need to maintain high standards of confidentiality in their work

(Professor Chris James, Bath University)

The role of the clerk:

- Sets the date, time and venue of the hearing, ensuring that the dates are convenient to all parties and that the venue and proceedings are accessible
- Collates any written material and sends it to the parties within the stipulated timeframe in advance of the meeting
- Meets and welcomes the parties as they arrive at the hearing
- Minutes the proceedings
- Notifies all parties of the committee's decision within the stipulated timeframe.

Appeal (or 'second') committee

All boards must have an appeals process and an appeals panel of no fewer than three governors who will hear any appeal. The governors or trustees must be impartial and not tainted with knowledge of the issue being considered at the appeal panel meeting.

Within an academy or free school one member of the appeal committee must be independent of the school board or if the academy is part of a multi academy trust (MAT) independent of the local governing body (LGB) for that setting. A MAT can source a third member for appeal panels from other LGBs in the MAT.

Schools can also set up a collaboration agreement with another school to allow both schools to 'borrow' governors for appeals committee membership if they find they do not have three impartial governors.

Dealing with an exclusion

Governors or trustees may need to form a panel to hear representations from parents relating to a pupil being excluded from school. The board **must** consider the reinstatement of an excluded pupil within 15 school days of receiving notice of the exclusion, regardless of whether parents make a representation if:

- The exclusion is permanent
- It is a fixed-period exclusion which would bring the pupil's total number of school days of exclusion to more than 15 in a term
- It would result in a pupil missing a public examination or national curriculum test.

If the board need to form a panel to consider an exclusion the clerk should think about where the hearing will be held, ensuring that the room will be free of interruptions and the seating arrangements are 'friendly' – perhaps in a circle, rather than each side of a desk, for example. Have water and tissues available and if possible, a breakout room, where parents can go if they become upset or need some time out.

If the hearing is for a permanent exclusion the panel will need to decide whether or not the child should be reinstated (rather than if they uphold the decision of the headteacher) and any conditions which may apply to the reinstatement. The panel will need to follow the DfE statutory guidance [School exclusion - GOV.UK](#).

The purpose of this procedure is to ensure that everyone present at the meeting has the opportunity to ask questions and that the panel obtains sufficient and appropriate information to enable it to make a decision about reinstatement. In reaching a decision on whether or not a pupil should be reinstated, the panel should consider whether the decision to exclude the pupil was lawful, reasonable and procedurally fair, taking account of the headteacher's legal duties and any evidence that is presented to the panel in relation to the decision to exclude.

Committees for Formal Proceedings continued

When establishing the facts in relation to an exclusion the panel must apply the civil standard of proof, i.e., 'on the balance of probabilities' (it is more likely than not that a fact is true) rather than the criminal standard of 'beyond reasonable doubt'.

In deciding to exclude the headteacher should ask themselves if they considered factors that could have contributed to the pupil's behaviour (e.g., SEND or bereavement) and sufficiently taken these factors account. Was an exclusion the most appropriate and reasonable sanction and consistent with the school's behaviour policy?

Where parents dispute the decision of the governors or trustees not to reinstate a permanently excluded pupil, they have a right of appeal for this to be reviewed by the Independent Review Panel (IRP). This is not a panel constituted from members of the board in school but is an external group. In maintained schools any parental appeal is directed to the IRP co-ordinated by the Local Authority; many academy schools choose to direct appeals to this IRP to avoid having to find and train appropriate individuals to form an independent panel. At this review meeting a governor or trustee from the Disciplinary Committee will be asked to explain how and why the committee reached their conclusion and the IRP will apply the following tests:

- Illegality - did the headteacher and/or board act outside the scope of their legal powers in taking the decision to exclude?
- Irrationality - was the decision of the board not to reinstate the pupil so unreasonable that it was not one a sensible person could have made?
- Procedural impropriety – was the process of exclusion and the board's consideration so unfair or flawed that clearly justice was not done?

Dealing with staff dismissal and appeals

The School Staffing (England) Regulations 2003 set out expectations for headteachers to take the lead in making decisions on appointments of staff outside the leadership group and in making initial dismissal decisions for staff.

The board must establish a procedure enabling staff to appeal against a decision to dismiss them. When establishing the procedure, the board should be mindful of their obligations under employment law.

The board must:

- Establish staff disciplinary rules and procedures and make these known to staff
- Establish procedures to ensure staff have the opportunity to seek redress for any grievance relating to their employment.

Suggested practice would be to ensure that at least three governors or trustees are available when required to take a decision to dismiss, where this has not been delegated to the headteacher. At least three governors or trustees who have not been involved in any previous action or decision connected with the dismissal will need to be available to hear any appeal.

Any committee dealing with HR matters should seek professional advice from the school or trust HR provider and ensure that the relevant school policy and procedure is adhered to. The member of staff may be supported and accompanied by a Union Representative throughout the process.

Dealing with an appeal regarding a complaint

It is important that the appeal hearing is independent and impartial and that it is seen to be so.

The aim of the hearing, which needs to be held in private, will always be to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant. However, it has to be recognised that the complainant might not be satisfied with the outcome if the hearing does not find in their favour. It may only be possible to establish the facts and make recommendations which will satisfy the complainant that his or her complaint has been taken seriously.

An effective panel will acknowledge that many complainants feel nervous and inhibited in a formal setting. Parents often feel emotional when discussing an issue that affects their child. The committee chair will ensure that the proceedings are as welcoming as possible. The layout of the room will set the tone and care is needed to ensure the setting is informal and not adversarial.

The individuals sitting on the panel need to be aware of and follow the school complaints procedure.

CLERKING IN ACTION...



At the panel meeting the chair of the panel will need to 'set the scene' explaining what the panel has been convened to do, who they will be hearing from and what the possible outcomes may be (upheld in full, upheld in part, not upheld). It's also worth the chair setting some parameters for behaviour, and explaining that this is a formal process, but the panel intend to make it as easy as possible for the complainant. The chair may wish to say that if the complainant needs to pause, or have some time out at any point then that is fine (for virtual meetings you may wish to offer the option of a virtual breakout room). If the complainant is likely to be agitated (or aggressive) it would also be worth explaining that all remarks and any questions must be addressed through the chair and that if behaviour deteriorates the proceeding will be paused, or may be halted. The protocol for the meeting should be explained – for example raising a hand (electronically or physically) to indicate that a participant would like to contribute.

The meeting needs to be conducted at the pace of the clerk to ensure that accurate minutes are taken.

The panel would normally hear from the complainant first, then the headteacher. They may also wish to speak with other staff members and any other witnesses (as appropriate) to see what the school has done to this point to try to resolve the complaint. They may also wish to speak with the investigating officer (the governor or staff member who investigated the complaint) if there is anything in the report of the investigation the panel would like to clarify.

Having heard from everyone all parties then withdraw and the panel (with the clerk present) discuss what they have heard and make their decision and recommendations. The discussion at this stage does not need to be recorded, but the decision – and the reasons for it – along with any recommendations does need to be recorded and included in the minutes. The minutes of the meeting are taken under Part Two (confidential business) but the complainant can request to see them and they would need to be released. There may need to be redactions made if other pupils, families or staff members are named in the minutes. Following the panel meeting the decision and reasons are confirmed in writing to the complainant.

The Clerk's Role in Virtual Meetings

To adhere to government COVID-19 guidelines, boards have been asked to work remotely and engage in virtual meetings. Having taken this step it is now likely that some element of virtual governance will remain once schools return to more normal functions. Clerks will need to consider the expectations this places on their role and that of the members of the board. To support effective virtual meetings, clerks may consider the following:

- Ensure that all members of the board are aware of the procedures outlined in the board's virtual meeting protocols (see below for suggestions)
- Notify members in advance that the meeting will be conducted virtually
- Share with the chair any objections to meetings taking place virtually
- Decide with the chair whether an audio recording of the meeting is appropriate
- Notify the members present at a meeting that a recording is taking place
- Ensure that recordings of any meetings are properly dealt with in line with the school's Data Protection Policy
- Arrange for the chair (or a nominated governor/trustee) to be a co-host when setting up the meeting
- Make arrangements for those who wish to present information to be able to do so on the chosen virtual platform
- Set up any polls and break out rooms that may be required for the meeting
- Set up the meeting ensuring that the meeting is secure as possible through a unique identity number and password forwarded in a separate communication
- Ensure that the requirement for papers to be circulated at least seven days in advance of the meeting is met as it would be for a face to face meeting
- Set up a waiting room so that only those known to the meeting are granted access.



Professional clerking supports the chair to ensure that meetings are planned efficiently over the course of the school year; that papers are received in a timely manner; and that minutes contain a clear record of debate and decisions.

(Clerking Competency Framework)

Useful tips for paperless clerking

It is good practice for clerks to receive a copy of all papers tabled in meetings of the board to help with the preparation of high quality minutes. The information below provides useful tips for the display of documents during a virtual meeting or afterwards when typing up minutes.

Displaying documents whilst participating in a virtual meeting

During a virtual meeting, if documents are not being presented to attendees by the meeting organiser, clerks are still able to view documents during the call. Before the meeting simply open all the documents and have them minimised on the task bar. There are several options for viewing documents during a meeting:

CLERKING IN ACTION...



If a meeting is being held virtually the clerk will need to pay particular attention to agenda items which may need to be confidential or items which may require a secret ballot to take place. If an item is confidential it will be important for the chair to remind attendees that they need to be contributing from a suitable location, where discussions cannot be overheard by third parties. If a secret ballot is required the clerk will need to set up an appropriate poll in advance of the meeting.

Switch between the document and the meeting

With all documents already open and minimised, open the document needed and view it as normal. This will mean the individual displaying the documents (via sharing their screen) will no longer be able to see participants in the call. If the clerk needs to see who is talking whilst screen sharing, they just click back on the skype/zoom/etc icon on your task bar and the meeting window will open again.

Have the meeting window and a document on the same screen

It is possible to reduce the size of the meeting window by clicking on the edge of the window and dragging it until it is smaller. It is possible to then also click inside the window, at the top and move it to the edge of the screen. In this way a clerk will be able to see the open document as well as the meeting participants, or who is speaking at the time.

CLERKING IN ACTION...



Can we make a decision by email?

Q. Something's cropped up and we need a decision – can we do it by email?

A. No. Governing board or committee decisions are made in person at a meeting so that the item can be considered and a consensus reached, with the discussion minuted. There is an option for virtual attendance, but the individual(s) attending virtually need to be able to hear and participate in the full meeting – not just telephone in to vote!

The model academy Articles make provision for voting by proxy.

The Clerk's Role in Virtual Meetings continued

Suggested virtual meeting protocols

Ground Rules

- Join on time
- Keep to the agenda
- Governors and trustees should identify themselves to the satisfaction of the other attendees
- Use webcam if possible (this may not be appropriate if there are lots of people in the meeting – please follow guidance from the chair)
- Use the mute button when not speaking to minimise background noise
- Allow additional time for participants to refer to documents that they may have to open in another application
- Ensure that the same precautions that are used in face to face meetings, continue to be used during virtual meetings, particularly around Data Protection security and confidentiality.

Confidentiality

- Governors and trustees must guarantee confidentiality is maintained throughout the meeting to ensure that there is no breach of the Code of Conduct
- Remote attendees must be aware of their surroundings when discussing confidential and sensitive information and must not conduct these conversations in a place where they will be overheard
- Items that are confidential must be made known at the start of the meeting and recorded separately.

Security of Data/ Information

- Boards must consider the security of the virtual platform that is being used. All participants should confirm they have read the privacy terms and conditions of the virtual platform they are using and ensure all security features have been switched on
- The meeting ID or link must not be shared on public platforms
- Participants must take 'reasonable measures' to protect the information they hold at home from unauthorised loss and access. All paperwork and electronic devices should be kept in a safe place
- Paperwork should not be left on view for other members of the household to see
- Screens should be locked when the device is not in use
- All necessary security updates should be installed on the device
- Passwords must not be shared with others for access to documents or applications
- Precautions should be taken against theft and loss of the device if it contains board information
- All those involved in governance should be mindful of what is put in emails / chats
- Confidential papers / documents that have no further use should not be placed in household waste, these must be kept and taken back to school to dispose of confidentially.

Declaration

- Governors and trustees must declare any conflicts of interest with agenda items at the start of the meeting, or as the conflict becomes apparent during the meeting and would need to withdraw from discussion and voting when the item is debated.

Participation

- Participants should give due attention to all matters being discussed and multi-tasking e.g., reading emails or watching TV must be eliminated
 - Full participation in the whole meeting is essential, not just the items on the agenda in which the governor or trustee has an interest or is voting on
 - If, after all reasonable efforts, it does not prove possible for a governor or trustee to participate in the meeting virtually, the meeting should continue with its business provided it is quorate
 - Participants should be mindful not to speak over others
 - The chair may ask all participants to only speak when invited to do so.
-

The Clerk's Role in Virtual Meetings continued

Respect	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It is important that everyone gets the chance to speak• Participants will need to pause more to give other participants a chance to join the discussions• Participants using video cameras should dress appropriately and have some consideration to their background• Virtual meetings are a place of mutual respect and collaboration• All governors and trustees are expected to comply with the board's agreed code of conduct.
Quorum	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If the technological link is lost, then a governor or trustee will cease to contribute to the quorum, however this would not prevent the meeting continuing in their absence unless it becomes inquorate. Technical difficulties would not include loss of visual communication or fleeting sound irregularities.
Voting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Governors and trustees attending the meeting virtually will be entitled to vote on any issue providing they have been 'present' for the whole agenda item which the vote relates to• Secret Ballots – the clerk will ensure arrangements are in place for any secret ballots to take place.
Notice of meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Notice of the meeting must be given to all governors and trustees in line with the normal notice period for meetings. (Statutory minimum seven days in maintained schools, academies minimum seven days, possibly longer, depending upon the Articles of Association.) In the event of an unforeseen emergency, then as much notice should be given as possible.
Apologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All apologies should be given to the clerk or the chair in advance of the meeting.
Before the meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There is an expectation that all attendees have read through all documentation and prepared some questions in advance of joining the meeting. These questions should ideally be shared with the headteacher beforehand.
Recording the meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Those attending the meeting (or hearing) must be informed in advance of the intention to record the proceedings. Any objections to recording must be considered by the chair• Prior to the commencement of the meeting, the chair must notify all attendees that recording will take place• The recording must stop at the formal close of the meeting or hearing• Attendees who were not present at the start of the meeting must also be notified that recording is taking place• Covert recordings must not be taken and to do so would be considered a disciplinary offence.
During the meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It is better to keep a virtual meeting short and focused• Time delays can happen, so make sure everyone can contribute and ask questions• If discussing confidential information, make sure rules around confidentiality are being adhered to• The chair to check in regularly with the clerk to ensure sound quality and time delays are being managed when taking minutes• The minutes should reference that the meeting had been held virtually• If sharing the screen, clear the desktop of any extra tabs or programs that may be open and make sure any private or sensitive information is hidden.
After the meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Minutes of the previous meeting should be agreed virtually by the full board and hard copies presented to the chair at future face to face meetings for signature.

“

A good clerk will contribute to the efficiency, effectiveness, productivity and compliance of the governing board.

(Governance Handbook)

Guide to Policies

Love them or hate them school policies are a necessary part of the governance role; however, they can start to feel onerous and take up more than their fair share of precious meeting time. How can governors and trustees deal effectively with policies, ensure they are up to date and meet their statutory obligations, whilst not focusing too much time on reviewing (or even writing) policies?

What is a policy?

Policies are a set of general guidelines based on the school's vision and ethos which help to form a consistent framework under which the school or academy operates. The dictionary definition of a policy is extensive, 'A course or principle of action adopted or proposed by an organization or individual', which can result in a school or academy trust having a huge legacy of policies that become time consuming for governors and trustees to monitor and review.

What policies do we need?

There are some **statutory policies for schools and academy trusts**. Where there is no appropriate model policy available the drafting of the policy should be delegated to the headteacher or other member of staff. Some policies will be school specific, others can be personalised to the school from a generic model.

Many schools have hundreds of policies – literally hundreds – all of which appear in turn on a committee or board agenda for governors and trustees to review and adopt. In a great number of instances these policies are not the remit of the board and indeed the policy is not a 'policy', but a 'procedure' for something which happens within the school. The 'application of sun cream policy' and the 'use of the hard court policy' actually have no place in board meetings; the fact that a document states 'policy' at the top does not mean that the board needs to have any part in it.

The policies which the board should invest time in are the ones which relate to their statutory and/or strategic role. The majority of statutory policies can be delegated and dealt with either at committee level, or by individual board members. There are a small number of policies which must be agreed by the full board, but even for these the detail can be addressed beforehand, with a recommendation brought to the quorate meeting.

The clerk should ensure that the statutory policies are covered in the annual cycle or policy cycle; with any statutory review period noted. The level of delegation should also be recorded, with the majority of policies delegated to individuals or committees and the board informed that they have been adopted. The clerk will also need to make the board aware if a policy needs to be reviewed or updated ahead of the normal review cycle, as something has changed.

With the exception of the Pay Policy, where the board needs to make some decisions, (the finance or resources committee can work on the detail and make a recommendation to the full board) the content and wording of any HR policies should not be changed, as they have been through union consultation. Deviation from the agreed version could invalidate the policy and support

from unions in dealing with any issues arising from the operation of the policy. The policy should be personalised with any school specific information, circulated to all governors or trustees for information and adopted in a quorate meeting. Similarly, a local governing body within a MAT may have policies that have been agreed by the academy trust board, which they have no delegated power to alter.

As part of policy review governors and trustees need to be aware of any changes that have been made to existing policies to support them in monitoring that where changes occur, they are being implemented by staff and reflected in practice. The approval date should be added to the policy and the policy planner updated with the next review date and, if required, the policy should be uploaded to the school website either by the clerk, if this has been agreed as part of the clerking role, or by a member of the school staff.

Most non-statutory policies will be operational policies and approval will be delegated to the headteacher. The board does not need to include these policies on agendas for board meetings. However, when monitoring visits are arranged, governors and trustees should confirm whether the school has any non-statutory policies relevant to the visit as well as considering relevant statutory policies. In agreement with the headteacher the visit may consider whether staff are implementing one or more of the non-statutory policies consistently, with feedback included in the visit report. Headteachers may wish to consider whether they need to have a specific non-statutory policy or whether they can reduce the number of school policies through combining several policies into one document.

The need for some non-statutory policies may now be obsolete. The headteacher and senior leadership team should consider whether the policy is still consistent with the vision and values of the school and whether it is having an impact. Policies should not just be written and stored, but should be live documents, actively influencing and supporting staff and the board in managing situations including health and safety, behaviour, wellbeing of staff and pupils, and teaching and learning.

For further information see 'Policies List' in the useful documents section.

CLERKING IN ACTION...



Make sure that you understand what the board expects their clerk to provide in terms of policies. The majority of policies will be written by the staff in the school, or provided as templates/models from the school HR provider or local authority. The Department for Education also provides models, or guidance on what policies need to contain. The clerk would not normally be involved in compiling or writing policies, unless they have an additional role in the school (such as a Bursar, School Business Manager or Administrator,) where some policy work may fall within their school role.

Documents which advise on policies

- [Statutory Policies for Schools and Academy Trusts](#) – Department for Education



Useful Websites

Academy Ambassadors

www.academyambassadors.org

A not-for-profit organisation set up to support academies across England in the recruitment of skilled trustees.

Academies Financial Handbook

www.gov.uk/guidance/academies-financial-handbook

Academy trusts must comply with this handbook as a condition of their funding agreement. It provides an overarching framework for implementation of effective financial management and control.

Anna Freud

www.annafreud.org/schools-and-colleges

Resources for schools and boards to support staff and pupil wellbeing.

Catholic Education Service

www.catholiceducation.org.uk/

Information for Catholic schools.

Church of England, education and schools

www.churchofengland.org/about/education-and-schools

Information for Voluntary Controlled and Voluntary Aided schools.

Clerking Competency Framework

www.gov.uk/government/publications/governance-handbook

Sets out the knowledge, skills and behaviours required to provide professional clerking to school and academy governing boards.

Competency Framework for Governance

www.gov.uk/government/publications/governance-handbook

Sets out the knowledge, skills and behaviours that school and academy governing boards need to be effective.

Department for Education: School Governance Update

www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-governance-update

News and communications from the Department for Education (DfE) relating to governance in maintained schools and academy trusts in England.

Education Endowment Foundation (EEF)

www.educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk

Resources for schools and boards.

Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA)

www.gov.uk/government/organisations/education-and-skills-funding-agency

Financial planning pages from the Department for Education

www.gov.uk/government/collections/schools-financial-health-and-efficiency

Department for Education pages for governors and trustees with Information, tools, training and guidance to help schools and multi-academy trusts with financial planning and resource management.

Governance Handbook

www.gov.uk/government/publications/governance-handbook

For maintained and academy schools, explaining the roles and functions of the board, legal duties, the main features of effective governance and sources of support.

Governors for Schools

www.governorsforschools.org.uk

An independent charity dedicated to recruiting volunteers to serve on school governing boards across England. Governors for schools also provide free e-learning modules and webinars on a range of governance topics.

Inspiring Governance

www.inspiringgovernance.org

A free service that enables you to find appropriately skilled volunteers interested in becoming a school governors or trustees in your area.

Ofsted

www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted

Ofsted is the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills. In addition to inspection reports they provide a range of information and resources which boards may find helpful.

Parentview

www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk

Parents can answer a number of questions to give their view on schools and settings.

Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS)

www.gov.uk/government/publications/schools-financial-value-standard-sfvs

The standard helps schools and local authorities meet basic standards for good financial health and resource management.

School Resource Management Self-Assessment Tool (SRMSAT)

www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-resource-management-self-assessment-tool

This tool can be used to reassure trusts that they are managing resources effectively and to identify any adjustments they need to make.

Succession Breeds Success

www.ncogs.org.uk

NCOGS document to support the board with succession planning.

UK Safer Internet Centre

www.swgfl.org.uk/resources/online-safety-policy-templates

Resources and guidance for parents, pupils, schools and boards on safer use of the internet, including model policies.

Useful Documents

Example of maintained school annual cycle checklist:

Checklist of statutory duties for a maintained school governing board

The items below are statutory requirements and appear on full governing board or committee agendas. Clerks should use the checklist to determine if compliance with these duties is adequately reflected in the minutes of governing board or committee meetings. If the governing board does not have committees all items will need to be addressed in meetings of the full governing board.

Please note that some items referenced under committees may also appear on agendas for full governing board meetings.

AGENDA ITEM	COMPLETED?
AUTUMN TERM	
Full Governing Board autumn term	
Policy review	
The following can only be approved by the full governing board:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Approve the Child Protection Policy/ Safeguarding Policy• Adopt the guidance document Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE)• Approve the Teacher Pay Policy.	
Delegated authority for financial transactions	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Agree virements / contracts limits delegated to the headteacher. These figures will vary from school to school but a minimum of £5,000 and maximum of £20,000 is suggested• Authorise staff responsibilities for signing orders, invoices and petty cash claims. Ideally those listed to sign orders should be different from those listed to sign invoices• Adoption of the financial procedures in the local authority's Scheme for Financing Schools• Authorisation to register unofficial funds. If the school holds an unofficial fund, then this needs to be registered each year and the chair should be authorised to sign the form on behalf of the governing board.	
Headteacher's performance management	
Agree the appointment of an external adviser and performance management governors, ensure arrangements are made to carry out the headteacher's appraisal.	
Voluntary Aided/Trust schools	
Set admissions arrangements.	
Teaching and Learning Committee autumn term	
Attendance update	
Governors should be satisfied that that the following live documents are in place	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Register of pupil admissions and register of pupil attendance.	
Child protection and safeguarding arrangements	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure the school has an effective Child Protection policy and safeguarding policies and procedures in place which include arrangements to keep pupils free from the dangers of radicalisation and extremism and understand how these are monitored (e.g., staff training)• Ensure that staff and governors are fully aware of their responsibilities regarding safer recruitment and governors who will be involved in recruitment have completed the necessary training• Ensure that a central record of recruitment and vetting checks (Single Central Record) is kept and updated, including recording that all relevant checks have been undertaken.	
Supporting Pupils at School with Medical Conditions	
Review and approve the arrangements and policy for Supporting Pupils at School with Medical Conditions and ensure that statutory guidance is followed.	
Personal development	
Ensure school promotes the cultural development of pupils through spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development.	

Useful Documents continued

AGENDA ITEM	COMPLETED?
Complaints policy Review and approve the complaints policy and ensure it is published on the school website.	
The national curriculum Governors should receive evidence of how school will implement the statutory national curriculum by subject content and year group.	
Collective worship policy/arrangements	
Pay and Performance Committee autumn term Receive recommendation from the headteacher appraisal panel on headteacher pay award and make decision on implementation. Receive recommendations from the headteacher relating to staff appraisal and make decisions on performance related pay awards for staff.	
Resources Committee autumn term	
Consider latest monthly reports for oversight of expenditure Liaise with those responsible for the unofficial school funds to ensure audit arrangements are in place.	
Pupil premium strategy The strategy must be published on the website.	
PE and sports premium strategy The strategy must be published on the website.	
Covid-19 catch-up premium The strategy must be published on the website.	
Policies for approval: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Charging and remissions policy• Governor expenses policy• Capability of staff policy• Dealing with allegations of abuse against staff. Ensure the statutory procedures, contained within the document KCSiE are in place and staff facing an allegation are effectively supported.	
Staffing and recruitment Ensure school has the capacity to induct Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) and fulfils statutory duties.	
Pay review report from the pay committee Monitor the implementation of the teacher's pay policy <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review eligibility for the Teachers' Pension Scheme• Approve teacher's appraisal policy and ensure it is effectively implemented and continued staff development opportunities are identified and resourced.	
Educational visits Ensure the school complies with LA procedures concerning the health and safety of pupils involved off site activities, including signing off visits on the Evolve system.	
SPRING TERM	
Full Governing Board spring term	
Policy review Approve the SEND Information Report (to be updated annually). The report (also referred to as the school offer) explains school's policy for children with SEND and must be published on the school website. The governing board should be satisfied suitable provision is in place and complies with legislation.	

Useful Documents continued

AGENDA ITEM	COMPLETED?
Behaviour and discipline Produce a written statement of behaviour principles and ensure this is published on the school website. The school Behaviour Policy will be based on the agreed behaviour principles.	
Review of information on the school website It is the responsibility of the Governing Board to ensure the website is up to date and complies with statutory requirements including the publishing of interests declared by the headteacher and other governors.	
Teaching and Learning Committee spring term	
SEND provision The SENDCO must be a qualified teacher and have adequate time and resources to fulfil the SENDCO role.	
School Food Standards Ensure that where the school provides school lunches and/or other school food and milk, this meets DfE standards.	
Careers information (years 8 to 13) and Provider Access Policy The school must publish information about the school's careers programme. This information must relate to the delivery of careers guidance to year 8 to 13 pupils in accordance with Section 42A of the Education Act 1997. For the current academic year, you must include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The name, email address and telephone number of the school's Careers Leader• A summary of the careers programme, including details of how pupils, parents, teachers and employers may access information about the careers programme• How the school measures and assesses the impact of the careers programme on pupils• The date of the school's next review of the information published• The Provider Access Policy Setting out the school's arrangements for managing the access of providers to pupils at the school for the purpose of giving them information about the provider's education or training offer.	
Early Years Foundation Stage (Primary and Early Years settings) Ensure the setting complies with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory documents.	
Resources Committee spring term	
Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS) Complete a self-assessment against the Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS) by 31 March. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure school has in place an inventory of non-capital assets• Ensure robust controls are in place in relation to fraudulent or improper use of public funds.	
Health and safety Ensure there is an annual inspection of premises and priorities for maintenance and development are identified.	
SUMMER TERM	
Full Governing Board summer term	
Policy review - <i>The following can only be approved by the full governing board:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff Disciplinary Policy• Staff Grievance Policy• Staff Code of Conduct.	
Safeguarding/child protection – section 175 return The chair or nominated safeguarding governor must check the supporting evidence available to verify the return is an accurate representation of safeguarding arrangements in school. The finalised report should be shared with all governors and attention should be drawn to actions highlighted.	
Budget approval (unless delegated to the Resources Committee).	

Useful Documents continued

AGENDA ITEM	COMPLETED?
Teaching and Learning Committee summer term	
Sex, Relationships and Health Education Ensure statutory guidance is followed and review and approve the Sex, Relationships and Health Education policies.	
Equality Ensure the school meets its statutory obligations in respect of equality and community cohesion including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Approve an accessibility plan. Governing boards are required to draw up and publish equality objectives every four years and annually publish information demonstrating how they are meeting the aims of the equality duty. The school needs to include details of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• eliminating discrimination• advancing equality of opportunity – between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it• consulting and involving those affected by inequality in the decisions your school takes to promote equality and eliminate discrimination (affected people could include parents, pupils, staff and members of the local community).	
Annual report to parents Ensure the school reports at least annually to parents on their child’s achievement and general progress.	
Resources Committee summer term	
School meals Approve the price of paid-for school meals.	
Budget Scrutinise and approve the new school budget.	
Policies to approve: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Data protection/GDPR policy• Freedom of information policy• Whistleblowing policy.	
Health and safety arrangements, including approving a suitable policy. To review, approve and implement a Health and Safety policy and ensure that the school meets all relevant health and safety legislation including first aid and assurance that fire safety precautions are suitable and risk assessed annually.	

Useful Documents continued

Example of academy annual cycle checklist:

Checklist of statutory duties for an academy trust board (and committees)

AGENDA ITEM	COMPLETED?
AUTUMN TERM	
Trust Board autumn term	
Scheme of delegation	
Approve a written scheme of delegated powers and terms of reference for committees and local governing bodies (if appropriate).	
Approve financial powers and delegation	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Agree virements/contracts limits• Level of delegation to the principal• Authorise staff responsibilities for signing orders and invoices.	
Confirm committees and committee membership	
Establish a committee of suitably experienced trustees to provide oversight of financial transactions (internal scrutiny). The board should also agree arrangements for internal scrutiny and risk management. The Academies Financial Handbook places a great emphasis on internal audit and the requirement to focus on evaluating the suitability of, and compliance with, financial and other controls, how these are being improved and how risks are being managed. Trusts with income over £50m must have an audit committee.	
Confirm an accounting officer and chief financial officer are in place	
Receive a report from the accounting officer	
The board should:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure accounts are externally audited and receive confirmation that an annual report and accounts will be submitted to ESFA by 31 December• Consider monthly management accounts and ensure managers take appropriate action in response to these and Key Performance Indicator (KPI) reports.	
Performance management	
Agree arrangements for the performance management of the principal(s)/chief executive officer. Trustees have a statutory duty to consider executive pay and other benefits, such as pension contributions and should ensure decisions follow a robust evidence based process.	
Policy review	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Approve the Child Protection Policy• Adopt the guidance document Keeping Children Safe in Education• Approve the Teacher Pay Policy/determine teachers' pay and conditions of service.	
Standards committee autumn term	
The curriculum	
Trustees should receive evidence of how each academy will implement a broad and balanced curriculum including English, mathematics, science and religious education.	
In addition, trustees should ensure that the following information is published on each academy website:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• the content of the curriculum your school follows in each academic year for every subject, including for mandatory subjects such as Religious Education, even if it's taught as part of another subject or subjects or is called something else• your approach to the curriculum should also include how you are complying with your duties in the Equality Act 2010 and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014 about making the curriculum accessible for those with disabilities or special educational needs• how parents or other members of the public can find out more about the curriculum your school is following• how you meet the 16 to 19 study programme requirements (if you have a sixth form or offer education at 16 to 19).	

Useful Documents continued

AGENDA ITEM	COMPLETED?
Finance committee autumn term (and risk and audit committee if separate)	
Receive monthly management accounts and a report from the accounting officer Monthly accounts must include income and expenditure accounts, variation to budget report, cash flows and balance sheet.	
Internal scrutiny including risk management (unless a separate Risk and Audit committee is in place) All academy trusts must have a programme of internal scrutiny to provide independent assurance to the board that its financial and other controls, and risk management procedures, are operating effectively. The Finance committee, or separate Audit committee, should: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Receive reports and review strategic risks and GDPR compliance• Be assured adequate insurance cover is in place• Prepare an annual report outlining the areas reviewed, key findings and recommendations for submission to the ESFA by 31 December with the annual accounts).	
Monitor the impact of government grant funding Ensure reports which include the statutory information required are received and published on the website <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pupil premium• PE and sports premium (primary schools)• 16-19 bursary and year 7 catch up funding (high schools)• COVID-19 catch up funding• Special education needs and disabilities (SEND) top up funding.	
Policies for approval <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Charging and remissions policy• Capability of staff policy. Dealing with allegations of abuse against staff. Ensure the statutory procedures, contained within Keeping Children Safe in Education, are in place and staff facing an allegation are effectively supported.	
Personal development Ensure school promotes the cultural development of pupils through spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development. <i>Note: this may be addressed by the Trust Standards committee under the curriculum item.</i>	
Attendance Governors should be satisfied that that the following live documents are in place <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Register of pupil admissions and register of pupil attendance.	
Behaviour policy Consider whether the academy has clear and effective behaviour policy with clearly defined consequences that are applied consistently and fairly by all staff.	
Anti-bullying strategy Ensure an effective anti-bullying strategy is implemented.	
Child protection and safeguarding arrangements <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure school has an effective Child Protection policy and safeguarding policies and procedures in place which include arrangements to keep pupils free from the dangers of radicalisation and extremism and understand how these are monitored (e.g., staff training)• Ensure that staff and governors are fully aware of their responsibilities regarding safer recruitment and governors who will be involved in recruitment have completed the necessary training• Ensure that a central record of recruitment and vetting checks (Single Central Record) is kept and updated, including recording that all relevant checks have been undertaken.	

Useful Documents continued

AGENDA ITEM	COMPLETED?
Supporting Pupils at School with Medical Conditions Review and approve (if approval has been delegated to LGB level) the arrangements and policy for Supporting Pupils at School with Medical Conditions and ensure that statutory guidance is followed.	
Complaints Policy Review and approve the complaints policy and ensure it is published on the academy website.	
SPRING TERM	
Trust board spring term	
Approve a budget forecast return outturn – deadline May 2020 Receive a report from the accounting officer The Board should: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Receive confirmation audited accounts are available on the website and will be filed with Companies House by 31 May• Consider monthly management accounts and KPI reports.	
SEND information report (unless delegated to LGB level) Approve the SEND Information Report (to be updated annually). The report (also referred to as the school offer) explains school's policy for children with SEND and must be published on the school website. The Trust board should be satisfied suitable provision is in place and complies with legislation.	
Approve the academy calendar for the next academic year The school must be open to pupils for 380 half-day sessions (190 school days) in each school year. Teachers are required to work for up to 195 days a year, allowing for five INSET days.	
Review of information on the website It is the responsibility of the board to ensure websites are up to date and comply with statutory requirements.	
Admissions policy If consultation has taken place the board is required to consider the responses. The final admissions policy must be approved by 28th February, admissions arrangements must be published on your website and a copy sent to the LA by 15 March.	
Standards committee spring term	
Careers information (years 8 to 13) and Provider Access Policy The school must publish information about the school's careers programme. This information must relate to the delivery of careers guidance to year 8 to 13 pupils in accordance with Section 42A of the Education Act 1997. For the current academic year, you must include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The name, email address and telephone number of the school's Careers Leader• A summary of the careers programme, including details of how pupils, parents, teachers and employers may access information about the careers programme• How the school measures and assesses the impact of the careers programme on pupils• The date of the school's next review of the information published• The Provider Access Policy Setting out the school's arrangements for managing the access of providers to pupils at the school for the purpose of giving them information about the provider's education or training offer. Ensure the participation of young people in education, employment and training – do 16 – 19 study programmes develop student's personal skills and prepare them for employment of higher education?	
Primary schools only – Ensure school complies with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory documents Principals and boards are responsible for the reliability of their EYFS profile outcomes. They must use quality assurance processes to ensure that the data accurately reflects the attainment of the current cohort of children. They should arrange for practitioners who are involved in completing EYFS profiles to take part in moderation activities.	

Useful Documents continued

AGENDA ITEM	COMPLETED?
Finance committee spring term	
Receive monthly management accounts and a report from the accounting officer Monthly accounts must include income and expenditure accounts, variation to budget report, cash flows and balance sheet.	
Schools Resource Management Statutory Assessment Tool (SRMSAT) Complete a self-assessment against the SRMSAT by 15 March. Ensure school has in place an inventory of non-capital assets. Ensure robust controls are in place in relation to fraudulent or improper use of public funds.	
Academy budget Subject to delegation <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make plans to draft a new school budget for approval by the board• Submit an electronic claim form (available from April) to claim funding for national non-domestic rates (NNDR).	
Internal scrutiny including risk management (unless a separate Risk and Audit committee is in place) All academy trusts must have a programme of internal scrutiny to provide independent assurance to the board that its financial and other controls, and risk management procedures, are operating effectively. The Finance committee, or separate Audit committee, should receive reports and review strategic risks and GDPR compliance.	
Premises Ensure there is an annual inspection of premises and priorities for maintenance and development are identified.	
Local governing body spring term *Exact responsibilities will depend upon the terms of reference/ Scheme of Delegation. Some Trusts may not delegate all the items below, in which case they would be considered at Trust Board level or by a committee of the Trust Board, rather than at LGB level.	
The school day Determine the length of the school day and year and recommend this to the board for approval. (Note: recommended not statutory.)	
School food and milk <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Where meals are provided, ensure they comply with DfE standards. This requirement also applies to other food such as breakfast and after school clubs• Ensure that school milk is provided free of charge to eligible pupils.	
Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) Governors should be satisfied that: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The SENCO is a qualified teacher working towards qualification and has sufficient time to fulfil their responsibilities.	
SUMMER TERM	
Trust board summer term	
Approve a three year budget forecast return The approval of a balanced budget must be minuted by 31 August. If the proposal is to set a deficit budget the board must notify ESFA within 14 days of the budget meeting.	
Receive a report from the accounting officer The Board should consider monthly management accounts and KPI reports.	

Useful Documents continued

AGENDA ITEM	COMPLETED?
Policy review <ul style="list-style-type: none">Whistleblowing – approve appropriate procedures, ensure all staff are aware of these and all concerns are responded to in a fair mannerApprove an expenses policy for trustees and local governors.	
Evaluation of trust board effectiveness including succession planning arrangements <p>Update and publish the Annual Governance Statement on the website.</p>	
Standards committee summer term	
Review arrangements for reporting annually to parents <p>Academies must provide any information on pupil assessments, on the same basis that maintained schools are required to provide the information.</p>	
Finance committee summer term	
Receive monthly management accounts and a report from the accounting officer <p>Monthly accounts must include income and expenditure accounts, variation to budget report, cash flows and balance sheet.</p>	
Agree the price of paid-for school meals	
Academy budget (Subject to delegation and if not addressed in spring term) <p>Make plans to draft a new budget for approval by the board).</p>	
Internal scrutiny including risk management (unless a separate Risk and Audit committee is in place) <p>All academy trusts must have a programme of internal scrutiny to provide independent assurance to the board that its financial and other controls, and risk management procedures, are operating effectively. The Finance committee, or separate Audit committee, should receive reports and review strategic risks and GDPR compliance.</p>	
Policies to approve <ul style="list-style-type: none">Data protection/GDPR policyFreedom of information policy and publication scheme.	
Health and safety policy and procedures <p>Review, approve and implement a Health and Safety policy and ensure that the school meets all relevant health and safety legislation including first aid and assurance that fire safety precautions are suitable and risk assessed annually.</p>	
Local governing body summer term *Exact responsibilities will depend upon the terms of reference/Scheme of Delegation. Some Trusts may not delegate all the items below, in which case they would be considered at Trust Board level or by a committee of the Trust Board, rather than at LGB level.	
Sex, Relationships and Health Education <p>Ensure statutory guidance is followed and review and approve the Sex, Relationships and Health Education policies.</p>	
Equality <p>Ensure the school meets its statutory obligations in respect of equality and community cohesion including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Approve an accessibility plan. <p>Governing boards are required to draw up and publish equality objectives every four years and annually publish information demonstrating how they are meeting the aims of the equality duty. The school needs to include details of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">eliminating discriminationadvancing equality of opportunity – between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share itconsulting and involving those affected by inequality in the decisions your school takes to promote equality and eliminate discrimination (affected people could include parents, pupils, staff and members of the local community).	

Useful Documents continued

Example of a parent governor 'vacancy' letter:

This letter should be accompanied by the Nomination Form and be on school headed paper.

Dear Parent or Carer

PARENT GOVERNOR ELECTION

There is a vacancy for a parent governor on our school's governing body and I am writing to invite nominations to fill this vacancy. Please think about becoming a governor or encouraging others to volunteer.

Parent governors are welcomed as valued members of the governor team and play an important role; the governing body works together as a group, meeting at least once every half term. Together they are responsible for the strategic direction of the school, promoting high standards of educational achievement and ensuring our resources are used to maximum impact. Life as a governor is interesting and varied and we feel sure that there are parents prepared to take on this important role and give their time and commitment to helping us to continue to improve the school's performance.

In looking to fill this vacancy the governors of the school have identified the following skills, experience and attributes that they feel would help strengthen the governing body: [insert as appropriate].

Training and support will be available to help you develop into the role. This will include in-house mentoring and support as well as access to external governor training, those new to being a governor are expected to attend induction training. The term of office for parent governors is [*] years. For further information about the role please get in touch with [insert name and contact details] who will be happy to help.

If you would like to stand for election, please complete and sign the enclosed nomination form and return to the school office no later than 12 noon on [insert date]. If you wish you can include a few details about yourself and why you would like to become a governor (not exceeding 100 words). This will then be circulated to all parents to help them decide who to vote for if an election is required. You do not have to complete this section, but if you don't you may put yourself at a disadvantage if there is an election. An election, by secret ballot, will be held if more nominations are received than the number of vacancies. If an election is needed details of the procedure will be sent to all parents.

Nominations must be from parents or carers with children at the school on the day that nominations close. The enclosed sheet summarises the disqualification criteria to serve as a governor. Anyone standing for election must certify that he/she is not disqualified for any reason. Parents/carers who have paid employment in the school for 500 hours per academic year or more or who are elected members of the Local Authority are not eligible to stand in these elections.

Yours sincerely

[insert name]

* NOTE: The term of office for a parent governor is 4 years unless recorded differently in the Instrument of Government for the governing body. Please insert as appropriate.

Example of a 'welcome' email:

Dear Governor/Trustee

Welcome to the governing board/Board of trustees/Local governing body. You've now been added to the membership list and can access agendas and other information sent to governors/trustees using the [insert name of system used for governing board information] - see point 3 below. I've attached some forms and other information, which I hope will be useful.

1. Information for prospective governors/trustees – even though you're already a governor/trustee it has some useful information. If you have not already completed the skills audit within the document, please could you do this and return it to me as soon as possible.
2. A glossary of common abbreviations
3. A governor guide to... [name of system used for board information]. You can use this site to browse for, and request training and you can also find useful guidance documents under the resources section. Your school have set you up with an account and you can login using the email address above. The privacy notice as to how your personal information will be used can be found here.
4. A governors' declaration of business and personal interests form – please complete and return this to me/the school.
5. A code of conduct for the board – again please sign and return to me/the school to acknowledge that you will act in accordance with the code.

Essential documents

The DfE's Governance handbook aims to support effective governance by:

- Outlining the core role and functions of the board;
- Summarising and providing a first point of reference on all the legal duties on boards, signposting to more detailed information, guidance and resources
- Providing information on the support available to boards to be effective.

It is not anticipated that you will read the whole document as a new governor, but it is useful to refer to when necessary.

Keeping Children Safe in Education – safeguarding children is the responsibility of everyone on the board so you should read this document to ensure you have an awareness of the principles and procedures in place.

Training

New governors/trustees should attend induction training as soon as possible. Please contact me/the school to book the training for you to ensure training is recorded and costs are tracked. [Give details of where training and can be viewed and contact details to obtain more information about relevant training courses].

Other sources of information

[Insert any other sources of information for example the multi academy trust or the local authority and the types of communications that are available]

Kind regards

Clerk to the governing board

Useful Documents continued

Example of agenda version 1:

Anywhere Community Primary School
Anywhere Primary School Full Governing Board Meeting
Monday xx October 20XX 16.30
Venue: School Library

Agenda

AGENDA ITEM	PREPARATION NOTES & MEETING AIMS	LEAD	TIME
1 Welcome & Apologies for Absence	Agree if apologies are to be sanctioned <i>Governors are reminded that the meeting will start promptly at 16.30</i>	JS	16.30
2 Attendance & Business/Pecuniary Interest Register	Please sign the form circulated at the meeting. Governors are reminded that they must declare any conflict of interest which becomes apparent during the meeting	EJ	16:32
3 Approval of Minutes of Last FGBM Held on 17 July 20xx	Please forward any errors, inaccuracies or queries to the Clerk no later than 24 hours before the meeting	CW	16.35
4 Matters Arising from Minutes of Last FGBM Held on 17 July 20xx including progress made on the actions raised	ACTION: circulate ToR's ACTION: write to Diocese ACTION: distribute visit notes ACTION: organise governance review ACTION: analysis of pupil premium spending Update on any items not covered elsewhere on the Agenda	JS PS CW LV HR	16.36
5 School Improvement 5.1 Headteacher's Report 5.2 School Development Plan (SDP) 5.3 School Improvement Partner's Annual School Improvement Report	Please read head teacher report and previously circulated Core Visit notes and Self Evaluation Data. We will be evaluating Term 1 progress. Questions to be submitted via the clerk by 30/9	CW	16:40
6 Committee Minutes – governor questions 6.1 Resources Committee 6.2 Teaching & Learning Committee	Please read attached minutes and email questions via the clerk by 30/9. Committee chairs will update on any developments since the last meeting	PS LV	17:00
7 Governor's Reports 7.1 Governors Visits & Link 7.2 Governor Reports, to respond to questions 7.3 Reports on Training Undertaken	Governors are expected to have read the reports and submit questions via the clerk by 30/9 Feedback & impact of training undertaken	PT HR LV JS	17:10
8 Clerk's Report	The clerk will inform the governing board of new legislation and/or guidance which will affect our work	EJ	17:20
9 9.1 Approval of Committee Structure & membership for the next academic year 9.2 Approval of Committee Terms of Reference and delegation 9.3 Approval of lead governor Terms of Reference and delegation	Please read Terms of Reference (ToR's) & Committee structure, including proposed level of delegation to individuals/committees	JS	17.25
10 Policy Adoption/Review 10.1 Safeguarding Policy 10.2 Accessibility Policy	Chairs of Committees to ensure review of statutory policies has taken place & recommend to FGB or confirm adoption	PS LV	17.35
11 Urgent items at the discretion of the chair	Any items must be notified to the Chair (Clerk) at least 24 hours in advance of the FGBM . However, it may not always be possible to include such items and they will then be carried forward to the next appropriate meeting	JS	17.40
12 Correspondence To note correspondence received	Please forward any relevant correspondence to the Clerk	JS	17.50
13 Impact from this meeting	A brief reflection on the impact this meeting will have on outcomes for the pupils in our school	JS	17.55
14 Date & Time of Next FGBM & committee meetings	To confirm the meeting dates previously agreed		

Useful Documents continued

Example of agenda version 2:

Add academy logo here

XXXX ACADEMY FINANCE COMMITTEE (INCLUDING AUDIT AND RISK) – NOTICE OF MEETING
Please find below the agenda for the committee meeting to be held on:
DAY 00 MONTH 2021 AT 0.00PM
If you are unable to attend this meeting please inform the Clerk, Chair or Principal.

Points 3.9 – 3.11 of the Academies Financial Handbook state:
Employees of the trust should not be audit and risk committee members, but the accounting officer and chief financial officer should attend to provide information and participate in discussions.
The chair of trustees should not be chair of the audit and risk committee.
Where the audit and risk committee is combined with another committee, employees should not participate as members when audit matters are discussed.

Agenda (model spring term finance, audit and risk committee agenda)

1	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND MEMBERSHIP MATTERS The quorum for the committee is listed in the articles of association.
2	REPORT NEW DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS Trustees must declare any changes or potential conflicts of interest in items on the agenda.
3	MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING Once approved the minutes become a public document.
4	REVIEW ACTIONS AND MATTERS ARISING Ensure the status of each action recorded in the previous minutes is reviewed.
5	RECEIVE MONTHLY MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS AND A REPORT FROM THE ACCOUNTING OFFICER (to include the impact of Covid-19) (TOR 2.01 – 2.03, 2.06) Trustees should receive and scrutinise budget reports at least six times per year and be satisfied that robust financial management procedures are in place in accordance with the guidelines in the Academies Financial Handbook. Monthly accounts must include income and expenditure accounts, variation to budget report, cash flows and balance sheet. Updates could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pupil numbers and the effect on the budget• How academy improvement plans are being resourced• Grants applied for such as Condition Improvement Fund (CIF)• Items reported to ESFA, including related party transaction.
6	COMPLETE THE SCHOOL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL AND SUBMIT THE COMPLETED CHECKLIST TO ESFA BY THE SPECIFIED ANNUAL DEADLINE (TOR 2.09) FORWARD PLANNING – ACADEMY BUDGET (TOR 2.04, 2.05) Subject to delegation, make plans to draft a budget for approval by the board: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Budget forecast return outturn to be approved by Trustees by 21 May
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Three year budget forecast return to be approved by Trustees by 30 July• Submit an electronic claim form (available from April) to claim funding for national non-domestic rates (NNDR)• Consideration should be given to funding implications arising from estates management.
8	INTERNAL SCRUTINY INCLUDING RISK MANAGEMENT (UNLESS A SEPARATE RISK AND AUDIT COMMITTEE IS IN PLACE) TOR 5.01 (Note: staff members should not participate in discussions about audit matters and it is not appropriate for the Chair of Trustees to chair a committee which will consider internal scrutiny due to potential conflicts of interest). All academy trusts must have a programme of internal scrutiny to provide independent assurance to the board that it's financial and other controls, and risk management procedures, are operating effectively. The Finance committee, or separate Audit committee, should: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consider any issues from the updated Covid-19 risk assessment• Review strategic risks and GDPR compliance and direct the programme of internal scrutiny by independent and objective individuals TOR 5.01• Receive reports from checks, including external audit reports, made to determine the adequacy of the trust's financial and other controls and management of risks, including the arrangement of adequate insurance cover TOR 5.02• Ensure oversight information submitted to DfE and ESFA that affects funding, including pupil number returns and funding claims is accurate and in compliance with funding criteria.



Useful Documents continued

Example of minutes version 1:

(NAME) SCHOOL GOVERNING BOARD		
FULL GOVERNING BODY MEETING		
Minutes of the meeting held on (Date) at (Time)		
PRESENT	(Name) Chair (Name) (Name)	(Name) Headteacher (Name) (Name)
IN ATTENDANCE: (Name) (Clerk, Governor Support Service) The meeting was held on Zoom/Teams/Skype/Meet		
1.00 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE		Actions
<p>Apologies were received and accepted from (Name)</p> <p>There had been no apologies received from (Name). The clerk informed the meeting that it was now four months since the first meeting that (Name) had not attended and that they would therefore be disqualified from being a governor at the school if they did not attend a meeting by (Date). The chair agreed to contact (Name) to find out why they had been unable to attend.</p>		Chair
2.00 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS AND REGISTER OF GOVERNORS' INTERESTS (Form circulated by the clerk)		
<p>All governors had completed the form 'Register of Governors' Business and Personal and Interests' and were reminded to declare any changes at subsequent meetings</p> <p>STATUTORY REQUIREMENT: The Governors' page on the school website must be updated.</p>		
3.00 ELECTIONS OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR AND AGREEMENT OF TERMS OF OFFICE		
<p>The clerk will conduct the election of the Chair then the Chair will conduct the election of the Vice Chair. Candidates standing should withdraw from the meeting whilst a decision is made. A one year term is recommended for each position. If you wish to stand as Chair or Vice Chair, please submit your nomination to the clerk ahead of the meeting. If you are paid to work at school, you are not eligible for either position.</p> <p>OR: No elections are required – Name and Name were elected Chair and Vice Chair until the first meeting of the academic year 2021/22.</p>		
4.00 MEMBERSHIP MATTERS		
<p>Governors should discuss membership issues, including terms ending, and agree plans to fill vacancies based on gaps identified through a governor skills audit. Boards can register with the following free recruitment sites: www.inspiringgovernance.org or www.governorsforschools.org. Schools should update the system 'get information about schools', the school website and governor details required by your LA with changes. A DBS check and a section 128 check must be completed for new governors within 21 days of appointment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Term for xxxx, co-opted governor ends on xx.xx.xxxx • Vacancies for 2 co-opted governors and 1 parent governor 		
5.00 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING		
<p>The approved minutes become a public document and can, if agreed, be shared on the school website.</p>		
6.00 REVIEW ACTIONS AND MATTERS ARISING		
<p>Ensure the status of each action recorded in the previous minutes is reviewed.</p>		
7.00 CONFIRMATION OF CODE OF CONDUCT (Sample circulated by clerk)		
<p>This outlines the principles by which the governing board and individual governors undertake their role. It is good practice for all governors to sign a copy of the agreed code of conduct (TOR 1.04).</p>		

Useful Documents continued

Example of minutes version 2:

Minutes of [name of school] Full Governing Board Meeting [Date, time, location]

Item no	Present: Record governors/trustees under this item. The time should be recorded against the names of latecomers and early leavers Mrs Jennifer Juniper (JJ) Parent Governor, Chair Mr. John Smith (JS) Co-opted Governor [name 3] [name 4] Etc In attendance: Record all non-governors/trustees and observers e.g., the clerk, Deputy Headteacher, associate members. Mrs. Jane Knowledge (JK) Clerk Miss Sue Friendly (SF) Associate member	Action / Decision
1	<p>Welcomes, Apologies, absences, quorum JJ welcomed [<i>new governors/trustees, observers, everyone</i>] to the meeting.</p> <p>Absent: <i>The minutes should formally record whether or not governors/trustees accept or reject an apology. The governor's reason for not attending does not need to be included in the minutes.</i> Apologies were received and accepted from Gov1 and Gov4. Gov6 had emailed JK to advise that she would join the meeting at 6pm.</p> <p>Quorum: <i>A minimum attendance of 50% of the available membership is needed for the governing board to make any decisions. Record that the meeting was quorate.</i></p>	The governors sanctioned the apology from HR and TR
2	<p>Declaration of Any Other Urgent Business (Or items to be discussed at the discretion of the chair) <i>Wherever possible, the use of 'any other business' should be avoided; any matter that merits discussion by the governing board should also warrant sufficient time to consider the issues carefully before decisions are made. A short discussion, at the beginning of the meeting, should identify any non-urgent matters that can be included in the next meeting's agenda. Alternatively, the chair can decide if the item is appropriate for this meeting, if the board will have sufficient information and if there is sufficient time to include the item at a later stage in the meeting.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Item 1 [give title] [give name of governor raising the item] 	

Signed: Date: Page: 1 of 3

Minutes of [name of school] Full Governing Board Meeting [Date, time, location]

3	<p>Declaration of Business/Pecuniary/other Interests <i>The Chair or clerk should remind governors/trustees that they must declare if they have a particular interest, financial or other, in any agenda item.</i> No interests declared.</p>	
4	<p>Approval of minutes from last meeting [date] <i>Once the board has agreed the accuracy of the minutes, the Chair must sign and date each page.</i> The minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting and signed by the Chair. Minutes will be filed by.....</p>	
5	<p>Matters arising from previous minutes (and not covered in this agenda) <i>This item should be used for brief reports on matters and/or actions from last meeting, not</i></p>	

Policy List

Policies to be approved in governing board or committee meetings of maintained schools and academies

The information below has been produced to help governing boards of maintained schools and academies discuss and approve policies which feature on agendas for full board and/or committee meetings and is based on the DfE's [Statutory policies for schools and academy trusts](#). Some model policies may be available from the local authority for maintained schools. Local governing bodies should check their scheme of delegation to confirm the level of approval.

Please note – not all policies need to be approved annually. Boards should work with the clerk to update this document each time a policy is approved so they have a correct record and can plan the next review date.

POLICY	APPROVER AND MEETING AGENDA	REVIEW FREQUENCY	REVIEW DETAILS	MOST RECENT VERSION AND USEFUL INFORMATION
Accessibility plan	Delegate to a committee, individual governor or headteacher (HT). Agreed approver and meeting agenda (e.g., resources committee autumn term)	Every 3 years	Last Approved DD/MM/YY Next Review DD/MM/YY	DfE guidance Standards for school premises .
Admissions (applies to foundation, voluntary aided, academy or Free Schools)	Delegate to a committee. Agreed approver and meeting agenda	Review annually	Last Approved DD/MM/YY Next Review DD/MM/YY	In community schools the LA is the admitting authority and sets the policy, however, governing boards of all foundation, voluntary aided, academy or Free Schools are own admitting authorities and are responsible for setting a policy to comply with the Admissions Code , and ensuring it is relevant to their school and arrangements.
Allegations of abuse against staff (procedures for dealing with)	Delegate to a committee, individual governor or HT. Agreed approver and meeting agenda	GB free to determine	Last Approved DD/MM/YY Next Review DD/MM/YY	The requirements are covered in Part 4 of Keeping Children Safe in Education
Appraisal policy NOTE: not statutory for academies	Delegate to a committee or individual governor. Agreed approver and meeting agenda	GB free to determine. We suggest it is reviewed annually with the pay policy	Last Approved DD/MM/YY Next Review DD/MM/YY	A model policy approved by union collective agreement may be available from the local authority HR services.
Behaviour policy and Governing board statement of behaviour principle NOTE: not statutory for academies but they must have written anti-bullying procedures	HT approves the behaviour policy. GB approves the behaviour principles statement Agreed meeting agenda	HT to determine review frequency of policy. GB determine review frequency of statement of behaviour principles.	Last Approved DD/MM/YY Next Review DD/MM/YY	Governing boards must have a written statement of general behaviour principles and this must be published on the school website. The Headteacher should refer to this when developing the school behaviour policy. Governing boards must ensure the school has a strong behaviour policy to support staff in managing behaviour, including the use of rewards and sanctions. The DfE guidance document Behaviour and discipline in schools includes a link to a checklist on the basics of classroom management and also links to other useful guidance including Use of reasonable force in schools .
Capability of staff policy	Delegate to a committee or individual governor. Agreed approver and meeting agenda	GB free to determine	Last Approved DD/MM/YY Next Review DD/MM/YY	A model policy approved by union collective agreement may be available from the local authority HR services.
Charging and remissions policy	Delegate to a committee, individual governor or HT. Agreed approver and meeting agenda	GB free to determine, suggest annually	Last Approved DD/MM/YY Next Review DD/MM/YY	DfE guidance Charging for school activities outlines what schools can charge for including voluntary contributions and reduced charges.

Policy List continued

POLICY	APPROVER AND MEETING AGENDA	REVIEW FREQUENCY	REVIEW DETAILS	MOST RECENT VERSION AND USEFUL INFORMATION
Child protection and safeguarding policy and DfE statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)	The policy must be approved, and KCSIE adopted, by the full GB	Annually	Last Approved DD/MM/YY Next Review DD/MM/YY	The following documents are relevant <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DfE statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (updated annually). There are four sections in the KCSIE guidance – governors and trustees are advised to be familiar with the content of this guidance, and must read it all, especially section 2 which focuses specifically on the responsibility of governing bodies, proprietors and management committees. Guidance for Safer Working Practice (2019) prepared and available from the Safer Recruitment Consortium. All education settings should ensure that staff have sight of this document, which can be adopted as a staff code of conduct. Schools can also choose to have their own personalised code of conduct for staff. <p>A governor should be appointed to oversee safeguarding/child protection aspects in school.</p>
Collective worship policy/arrangements NOTE: this is not a statutory policy although collective worship is a statutory requirement	Delegate to a committee. Agreed approver and meeting agenda	GB free to determine	Last Approved DD/MM/YY Next Review DD/MM/YY	Collective worship The 1944 Education Act requires all pupils to attend a daily act of collective worship. It is suggested that schools interpret requirements (i.e., the word worship) as being inclusive of faith and non-faith traditions and with sensitivity and realism (reflecting social, religious and educational changes since 1944) demonstrating the fundamental value of tolerance and other SMSC aspects. It is recommended that schools have a collective worship policy in place.
Complaints policy and procedure	Delegate to a committee, individual governor or HT. Agreed approver and meeting agenda	GB free to determine	Last Approved DD/MM/YY Next Review DD/MM/YY	Useful DfE guidance documents are: Best Practice Advice for School Complaints Procedures Best practice guidance for academies complaints procedures Understanding and Dealing with Issues Relating to Parental Responsibility.
Data protection/GDPR policy (to include, where appropriate collecting a pupil's biometric data such as fingerprints for the purposes of an automated biometric recognition system)	Delegate to a committee, individual governor or HT. Agreed approver and meeting agenda	Register annually and review at least every two years	Last Approved DD/MM/YY Next Review DD/MM/YY	<i>The Data Protection Act 2018</i> introduced the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and is a law designed to protect the privacy of individuals, in particular with regards to the processing of their personal information. Schools are their own data controllers and are responsible for registering individually with the Information Commissioners Office (ICO) as well as complying with regulations. Under GDPR schools are also required to have various Privacy Statements . Useful information and videos are available from the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) and the DfE guidance on biometric data .
Early years foundation stage (EYFS) – various policies and procedures	Delegate to a committee, individual governor or HT. Agreed approver and meeting agenda	GB to determine, based on guidance	Last Approved DD/MM/YY Next Review DD/MM/YY	Schools with EYFS provision are required to have policies and procedures on a range of issues covering safeguarding and welfare as set out in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage . Schools are not required to have separate policies to cover EYFS requirements provided the requirements are already met through an existing policy. An EYFS profile assessment is required for each child during the academic year they reach the age of 5 (for most children this is the reception year in primary school).

Policy List continued

POLICY	APPROVER AND MEETING AGENDA	REVIEW FREQUENCY	REVIEW DETAILS	MOST RECENT VERSION AND USEFUL INFORMATION
<p>Equalities information and objectives (this is not a policy but is a statutory requirement)</p>	<p>elegate to a committee individual governor or HT</p> <p>Agreed approver and meeting agenda</p>	<p>GB to determine based on guidance</p>	<p>Last Approved DD/MM/YY</p> <p>Next Review DD/MM/YY</p>	<p>To ensure the school meets the requirements of Equality Act 2010 (in particular ensuring compliance with the Public Sector Equalities Duty) schools must:</p> <p>(a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010.</p> <p>(b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.</p> <p>(c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.</p> <p>Schools must also publish</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> equality objectives, at least every four years (from 6th April 2012) information to demonstrate their compliance with the public sector equality duty.
<p>First Aid Policy</p>	<p>GB or trust board</p> <p>Agreed agenda</p>	<p>Recommended annually</p>	<p>Last Approved DD/MM/YY</p> <p>Next Review DD/MM/YY</p>	<p>The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010 require schools to draw up and implement a written policy on first aid.</p> <p>The minimum requirements for school first aid provision are a first aid needs assessment; a written policy on first aid; and an appointed person to take charge of first aid arrangements. A school needs suitably stocked first aid boxes in appropriate locations such as labs and PE departments. There is no mandatory content, but it is recommended that schools consider the content of BS 8599</p> <p>The HSE has issued guidance on First Aid at Work (L74). The latest version can be found at www.hse.gov.uk.</p>
<p>Freedom of information policy (publication scheme)</p>	<p>Delegate to a committee, individual governor or HT.</p> <p>Agreed approver and meeting agenda</p>	<p>GB free to determine</p>	<p>Last Approved DD/MM/YY</p> <p>Next Review DD/MM/YY</p>	<p>FOI is concerned with the provision of information not covered by the Data Protection regulations, but the two areas are closely linked. As public authorities, schools are subject to the Freedom of Information Act (2000) in their own right and are responsible for the provision of information in response to requests made. Schools must produce a publication scheme. The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) has produced a document with details of what needs to be published and a template for the publication scheme.</p>
<p>Governors' expenses/allowances policy</p> <p>(is not statutory for academies, but DfE highly recommends they follow the guidance for maintained schools)</p>	<p>Delegate to a committee, individual governor or HT.</p> <p>Agreed approver and meeting agenda</p>	<p>GB free to determine</p>	<p>Last Approved DD/MM/YY</p> <p>Next Review DD/MM/YY</p>	<p>The governing board may wish to refer to the government's Travel - mileage and fuel rates and allowances guidance</p>
<p>Health and safety policy/procedures (including first aid)</p> <p>NOTE: The policy should be determined by the employer, the LA for a community or voluntary controlled schools or governing board for voluntary aided or foundation schools</p>	<p>Delegate to a committee</p> <p>Agreed approver and meeting agenda</p>	<p>GB free to determine</p>	<p>Last Approved DD/MM/YY</p> <p>Next Review DD/MM/YY</p>	<p>The following document may be useful Good Estate Management for Schools.</p>

Policy List continued

POLICY	APPROVER AND MEETING AGENDA	REVIEW FREQUENCY	REVIEW DETAILS	MOST RECENT VERSION AND USEFUL INFORMATION
Medical conditions policy	Delegate to a committee. Agreed approver and meeting agenda	GB free to determine	Last Approved DD/MM/YY Next Review DD/MM/YY	When reviewing their policy schools should refer to the statutory guidance Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions .
Pay policy (for academies the Board of Trustees must determine teachers' pay and conditions of service)	The policy must be approved by the full GB but can be reviewed by a committee. Agreed approver and meeting agenda	Annually	Last Approved DD/MM/YY Next Review DD/MM/YY	A model policy approved by union collective agreement may be available from the local authority HR services.
Relationships and sex education (RSE) policy Covid impact: policy approval can be completed in the spring term with teaching beginning no later than the start of the summer term 2021	Delegate to a committee, individual governor or HT. Agreed approver and meeting agenda	GB free to determine – ideally review briefly annually and update in full every 2-3 years	Last Approved DD/MM/YY Next Review DD/MM/YY	From September 2020 all primary age children should be taught Relationships Education and Health Education and all secondary age children should be taught Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education.
SEND Information report and SEND policy	Must be approved annually by the full GB Agreed meeting agenda	Annually	Last Approved DD/MM/YY Next Review DD/MM/YY	Governors should refer to the Special education needs and disabilities code of practice statutory guidance A governor should be appointed to oversee SEND aspects of school.
Staff disciplinary policy (including staff conduct)	Must be approved by full GB for maintained schools Agreed meeting agenda Academies can delegate to a committee, individual governor or the Principal Agreed approver and meeting agenda	GB free to determine	Last Approved DD/MM/YY Next Review DD/MM/YY	A model policy approved by union collective agreement may be available from the local authority HR services.
Staff grievance and bullying and harassment policy	Must be approved by the full GB for maintained schools Agreed meeting agenda Academies can delegate to a committee, individual governor or the Principal Agreed approver and meeting agenda	GB free to determine	Last Approved DD/MM/YY Next Review DD/MM/YY	A model policy approved by union collective agreement may be available from the local authority HR services.
Whistleblowing policy/procedures NOTE: not statutory for maintained schools	Trust board		Last Approved DD/MM/YY Next Review DD/MM/YY	Trusts must have an appropriate procedure for whistleblowing , at both the trust and academy operational levels. Although a whistleblowing policy is not statutory for maintained schools it is strongly recommended that one is agreed. Whistleblowing procedures for maintained schools provides government guidance.
Other non-statutory policies (e.g., staff leave of absence and annual leave, safer recruitment, work and families policy for school based staff)			Last Approved DD/MM/YY Next Review DD/MM/YY	

Calculating Clerking Hours

TASK	NUMBER OF HOURS	TOTAL
Full GB meeting (how many?)		
Committee 1 (how many?)		
Committee 2 (how many?)		
Committee 3 (how many?)		
Add more committees if necessary		
Allowance for additional meetings		
Statutory duties / other tasks		
Additional duties		
Training, development and research		
Overall total of hours		

For example:

TASK	NUMBER OF HOURS	TOTAL
Full GB meeting x 6	8 - 10hrs per meeting x 6	48 - 60
Resources Committee x 6	8 - 10hrs per meeting x 6	48 - 60
Teaching & Learning Committee x 6	8 - 10hrs per meeting x 6	48 - 60
Pay & Performance Committee x 2	8 - 10hrs per meeting x 2	16 - 20
Ethos Committee x 6	8 - 10hrs per meeting x 6	48 - 60
Allowance for 3 additional meetings per year based on historical need	8 - 10hrs per meeting x 3	24 - 30
Statutory duties / other tasks including governor queries & emails, distributing information	20hrs per term	60
Additional duties (e.g., school website information; Edubase; governor induction; policies)	15hrs per term	45
Training, development and research	15hrs per term	45
Overall total of hours		382 - 440



There is no doubt in my mind that the work of the clerk is very important in school governing in England. Good clerks make a significant contribution to school governing and to schools.

(Professor Chris James, Bath University)

Glossary Guide

Academy /Academies are publicly funded independent schools. Academies have different governance arrangements from other schools

Academy committee A committee of the trust board in a Multi Academy Trust (MAT). The role and responsibility of any committee is defined in the MAT's scheme of delegation (see also local governing body)

Academy converter A school which converted to academy status voluntarily (usually high performing at the time of conversion), having previously been a local authority maintained school

Academy sponsor led A school which converted to academy status with the support of a sponsor (usually lower performing at the time of conversion)

Admissions Code A document providing statutory guidance on schools' admission with which all schools must comply

Articles of Association The Articles of Association is the formal governing document for an academy and sets out its rules for operating, including the composition of the governing board/board of trustees

ASCL Association of School and College Leaders – a headteacher union

Associate members Individuals appointed by the governing board of a maintained school. They are not part of the board but are allowed to attend meetings and sit on committees and can be given voting powers at committee level. They are appointed for 1-4 years, with the opportunity for re-appointment. An associate member could be a pupil, member of staff or someone with expertise in a particular area. Academies' Articles of Association allow them to appoint non-governors/trustees to committees and give them voting rights

ASP Analyse school performance – has replaced RAISEonline which closed on 31st July 2017. Access to this service is via the Department for Education's Secure Access portal, governors and trustees can be given access to view detailed performance analysis to support local school improvement

Attainment 8 A headline measure of school performance at GCSE introduced from 2016. Measures the achievement of a pupil across English, maths and six further qualifications

Attainment targets These establish what children of different abilities should be expected to know and be able to do by the end of each key stage of the national curriculum

AWPU Age-Weighted Pupil Unit – the sum of money allocated to the school for each pupil according to age. This is the basic unit of funding for the school

Baseline assessment Assessment of pupils' attainment on entry to reception. Schools may currently decide to conduct baseline assessments in reception, but this is not a statutory requirement. Baseline assessment will become statutory from September 2021: schools will carry out the assessment within the first 6 weeks of children starting school.

Capital funding Spending on projects, improvements and extensions to the school's land and buildings

Catch-up premium Funding to support children and young people to catch up lost time after school closure during COVID-19 pandemic. Boards must be able to show they are using the funding to resume teaching a normal curriculum as quickly as possible following partial or full school closure. This information must be published on the school website

Chair's action In maintained schools the chair is allowed to take decisions without asking the governing board if a delay will be detrimental to the school, a member of staff, a pupil or a parent. In academies, this power is not automatic and must be delegated to the chair

Charitable Objects set out within the Articles of Association in academy schools, explaining what the charity set up to run the Trust seeks to achieve

Chief Executive Officer (CEO) The lead professional and head of the executive branch for a group of academies known as a multi-academy trust (MAT). Although not being a headteacher in any school, they will be ultimately accountable to the governing board/board of trustees for all aspects of the MAT as a whole

CiC Children in Care

Clerk (or Governance Professional) Professional-quality clerking is about much more than taking minutes to record the discussions and decisions of the board. It is also about providing governing boards with expert advice on governance, procedures and compliance and directly contributing to its efficient conduct. Professional clerking has a vital role to play in meeting the administrative and procedural requirements of boards and enabling efficient and effective discussion and decision making

Clerking Competency Framework A document developed by the Department for Education (DfE) outlining the knowledge, skills and behaviours required to provide professional clerking to the governing boards of maintained schools, academies and multi-academy trusts

Collaboration An agreement between two or more schools to work together on one particular issue. They keep their individual governing boards, but may set up a joint committee to which they can delegate powers

Community schools Maintained schools at which the local authority (LA) is the employer, owns the land and buildings and sets the admission criteria. The LA also take a proportion of income known as 'top slice' for the provision of central services

Community special schools Maintained schools which make special educational provision for pupils with statements of special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) or education, health and care plans (EHCs), whose needs cannot be fully met from within mainstream provision. The LA is the employer, owns the land and buildings and sets the admission criteria

Competency framework for governance A document developed by the DfE, setting out the skills, knowledge and behaviours needed for effective governance

Competitive tendering Obtaining quotes or tenders from alternative suppliers before awarding contracts

Co-opted governor/trustee Appointed by the governing board, on the basis of their skills

CPD Continuing Professional Development for school staff or the governing board

CPOMS - Safeguarding and Child Protection Software for Schools

Delegated budget Money provided to schools, which governors can manage at their discretion

Delegated powers Authority given to a committee, an individual governor/trustee or the headteacher to take action on behalf of the governing board. In multi academy trusts this also refers to powers delegated to academy local governing bodies/committees

Glossary Guide continued

DfE Department for Education – the government department responsible for schools and children

Directed time Time when a teacher must be available to carry out duties, including attending staff and parent meetings, under the direction of the headteacher – a maximum of 1265 hours in a school year

Disapplication A term used where national curriculum requirements may not apply to a pupil

DSG Dedicated School Grant – funding from central government to the LA, the majority of which is then delegated directly to individual schools through the LA's funding formula

EEF Education Endowment Foundation

EAL English as an Additional Language

EBacc A school performance measure based on achievement of GCSEs in 'core academic subjects' of English, maths, history or geography, the sciences and a language

EBD Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties

ESFA Education and Skills Funding Agency – a single funding agency accountable for funding education and training for children, young people and adults (formerly the EFA and SFA)

EHC plans Education, health and care plans (Also EHCP) – the document which replaces statements of SEN and Learning Difficulties Assessments for children and young people with special educational needs

ESO Education Supervision Order, which LAs may apply for to deal with cases of poor attendance at school

Ethos The morals, values and beliefs that do, or at least should, underpin the school culture

EWO Education Welfare Officer – a professional worker who visits pupils' homes and deals with attendance problems and other welfare matters in co-operation with the school

Ex officio Able to hold office and attend meetings by virtue of holding a particular office

Exclusion The temporary or permanent removal of a pupil from school for serious breaches of the school's behaviour and discipline policy

Executive headteacher Unlike a traditional headteacher who leads one school only, an executive headteacher is the lead professional of more than one school; or a lead professional who manages a school with multiple phases; or who has management responsibility significantly beyond that of a single school site

Executive leaders Those held to account by the board for the performance of the organisation. This may be the CEO, executive headteacher, headteacher or principal, as well as other senior employees/staff, depending on the structure of the organisation

Extended schools/ Enrichment services Schools that provide a range of services and activities often beyond the school day, to help meet the needs of the pupils, their families and the wider community

Federation Two or more maintained schools governed by one board

FFT Fischer Family Trust – a non-profit company that provides data and analysis to LAs and schools in England and Wales

Foundation schools Maintained schools in which the governing board is the employer, owns the land and buildings and sets the admission criteria

Foundation special schools Maintained special schools, which have the same freedoms as foundation schools (see above)

EYFS Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum which sets standards for the learning, development, and care of children from birth to 5-years-old

Free school A type of academy, either a new school set up in response to parental demand or a fee-paying school joining the state education system

FSM Free school meals – pupils are eligible for FSM if their parents receive certain benefits

Funding agreement The document which sets out the relationship between an academy/MAT and the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA)/Department for Education (DfE)

GCSE General Certificate of Secondary Education

GCSE grading GCSEs in England have a 9 to 1 grading scale, to better differentiate between the highest performing students and distinguish clearly between the old and new exams. Grade 9 is the highest grade and will be awarded to fewer students than the previous A* grade. The first exams in new English language, English literature and maths GCSEs were taken in summer 2017 and the rest of the new GCSEs were rolled out over a three year period

GDPR General Data Protection Regulation

GIAS Get Information About Schools. Government database. Schools must use GIAS to provide the required information relating to the individuals involved in governance at their setting. Maintained school governing boards are under a duty to provide this information through the Education Act 1996; the requirement for academy schools is contained within the Academy Financial Handbook. The information must be kept up to date when changes occur. It is worth noting that each school in a federation has a separate DfE number, so they appear separately on GIAS, therefore the governance information will need to be completed for each school in the federation. The information is collected and published through a secure site which is accessed via the school's username and password.

Headteacher Board Each Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) has a board of elected headteachers of academies in their area to advise on and scrutinise their decisions

HLTA Higher Level Teaching Assistant

HMCI Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools

HMI Her Majesty's Inspector

HSE Health and Safety Executive

Hub Board A governing board established to oversee a group of schools, often within a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT). The hub board is, in effect, a committee of the trust board and may have delegated responsibilities, which will be defined in the Scheme of Delegation (SoD)

IEP Individual Education Plan for pupils with special educational needs

IGCSE International GCSE

INSET In-Service Education and Training – training for teachers and other school staff. Maintained schools must meet for at least 380 sessions or 190 days during any school year to educate their pupils. Schools are also entitled to up to five non-educational days to be used for curriculum planning/training

Glossary Guide continued

Instrument of Government A legal document setting out the composition of maintained school boards. The Instrument of Government can be changed through reconstitution

KPI's Key Performance Indicators. Used to evaluate the success of a school or of a particular activity in which it engages

KS 1–4 Key stages 1-4. The four stages of the national curriculum: KS1 for pupils aged 5-7; KS2 for 7-11; KS3 for 11-14; KS4 for 14-16.

KS5 Key stage 5, this applies to 16-19 year-olds but is not part of the national curriculum

LA Local authority The LA has certain responsibilities regarding education, for example the educational achievement of looked-after children and for school places planning. The LA may also provide other services to schools, provided via a service level agreement to maintained schools and academies

LA Governor Nominated by the LA but appointed by the governing board

LAC Looked After Children Children who are in care provision. May also refer to children who have been in care at any time in the last six years

LGB Local governing body A term often used to describe a committee of a trust board for an individual school within a MAT. The Scheme of Delegation will define if the LGB has any delegated responsibilities or is purely advisory. Accountability sits with the MAT Trust board

LGC Local governing committee A term often used to describe the governance of an individual school within a MAT. Local governing committees are, in effect, committees of the trust board; they can be delegated responsibility for items, but accountability will remain with the trust board. The Scheme of Delegation will define if the LGC has any delegated responsibilities, or is purely advisory

LACSEG Local Authority Central Spend Equivalent Grant – the funding academies receive to meet their additional responsibilities

Maintained schools publicly funded schools overseen by the local authority. These schools must follow the national curriculum and national pay and conditions guidelines

Management Partnership is when two (or more) schools share one headteacher who has the responsibility for the strategic leadership of both schools. Both schools remain completely separate and retain their own individual governing boards.

MAT Multi academy trust – where two or more academies are governed by one trust (the members) and a board of trustees (the trustees)

MAT board Common term for the board of trustees/directors overseeing a multi academy trust

Member In an academy school the Members hold the Trust board to account. Members may be named individuals, or corporate members, such as Diocesan representation

Mixed ability A teaching group in which children of all abilities are taught together

NAHT National Association of Head Teachers – a headteacher union

NASBM National Association of School Business Managers

NASUWT National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers – a teaching union

National curriculum This was established by the 1988 Education Reform Act to ensure that all pupils receive a broad and balanced education, which is relevant to their needs. Academies do not need to follow the national curriculum, but many choose to do so

National Schools Commissioner (NSC) A civil servant responsible for co-ordinating the work of the eight Regional Schools Commissioners (RSCs)

NEU National Education Union

NFER National Foundation for Educational Research

NGA National Governance Association. A national membership organisation for school governors, trustees and clerks

Non-teaching (support) staff Members of the school staff employed to provide services in a school, such as teaching assistants, mealtime assistants, cleaners and office staff

NOR Number on roll; the number of pupils registered to attend the school

NPQH National Professional Qualification for Headship – training for new or aspiring headteachers

NQT Newly Qualified Teacher

Ofqual Office of the Qualifications and Examinations Register – the regulator of examinations and qualifications

Ofsted Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills – the body which inspects education and training for learners of all ages and inspects and regulates care for children and young people

PAN Published Admissions Number – the number of children the LA (or governing board of a foundation or voluntary aided school or academy trust) determines can be admitted to any one year group in the school

Parent governor/trustee Member of the governing board elected by the parents of the school's pupils

Peripatetic teacher One who teaches in a number of schools, to give specialist instruction, e.g., in music

PE and sports premium Funding for years 1 to 6 to provide additional PE and sport beyond that already provided in the curriculum. Boards must report on their use of the funding by publishing information on the school website

PFI Private Finance Initiative

PGCE Post-Graduate Certificate of Education

PPA Planning, Preparation and Assessment – 10% guaranteed non-contact time for teachers

Progress 8 A headline measure of school performance at GCSE introduced from 2016. It aims to capture the progress a pupil makes from the end of KS2 to the end of KS4

PRP Performance Related Pay – schools following the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document must ensure teachers' pay is linked to their performance. The board will delegate responsibility for performance related pay to a Performance and Pay Committee, under clear terms of reference

PRU Pupil Referral Unit – alternative education provision for pupils unable to attend a mainstream school or special school

PSP Pastoral Support Programme for pupils at serious risk of permanent exclusion

Glossary Guide continued

PTA Parent Teacher Association – or **PSA** (Parent Staff Association) or **PTFA** (Parent, Teacher and Friends Association)

PTA UK National membership organisation for parent teacher associations – formerly NCPTA

PTR Pupil/Teacher Ratio – this is calculated by dividing the number of pupils in a school by the number of full-time equivalent teachers

Public Sector Equality Duty A duty to consider if and how decisions may affect people who are protected under the Equality Act 2010

Pupil premium Funding allocated to schools to support pupils eligible for FSM, in care, or who have parents in the armed forces. Boards must report on their pupil premium strategy and how the funding has been spent to improve outcomes for pupils. This information must be published on the school website

QTS Qualified Teacher Status

Quorate A meeting is quorate if a sufficient number of members are present. Decisions can only be ratified if a meeting is quorate

Quorum The minimum number of members present at a meeting before decisions can be made

Regional Schools Commissioners (RSCs) Civil servants that act on behalf of the Secretary of State. Their responsibilities include intervening in underperforming schools, making decisions on conversion to academy status, and encouraging and deciding on applications for academy sponsors. There are eight RSCs serving different regions, reporting to the National Schools Commissioner.

Resolution A formal decision which has been proposed and agreed at a meeting

Revenue funding Revenue funding can be spent to provide services and buy items that will be used within a year. Examples include salaries, heating, lighting, services and small items of equipment

Risk Register A document analysing financial and business risks, identifying the scale of the risk and what mitigating factors have been put in place

ROA Record of Achievement

SACRE Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education – local statutory board which advises on religious education and collective worship

SATs Standard Assessment Tasks – used for national curriculum assessment

Scheme of delegation A document defining the lines of responsibility and accountability. The Governance Handbook defines what a good scheme of delegation should contain

School census A statutory return which takes place during the autumn, spring, and summer terms. Maintained schools and academies are required to take part in the census

School Development Plan/School Improvement Plan (SDP/SIP) The operational document describing how the school will work towards the strategic priorities set by the governing board

Secondment The release of staff on a temporary basis for work elsewhere

SEND Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

SENDCO SEND Co-ordinator – the teacher responsible for co-ordinating SEND provision in the school

Senior Executive Leader (SEL) – academy trusts must appoint a senior executive leader (who may be known as the principal in a single academy trust, or CEO in a MAT, or equivalent) as the accounting officer (AO) for the trust

Service level agreement (SLA) A contract between a service provider (the local authority or another private sector provider) and a school, defining the level of service expected from the service provider

SLT Senior Leadership Team

Service premium Funding allocated to schools to support pupils whose parents are serving in HM armed forces, or have at any time since 2011, or who are in recipient of a child's pension from the Ministry of Defence

SFVS Schools Financial Value Standard – a means for the governing board in a maintained school to assess its financial processes, capabilities and skills. The audit team will evaluate a school and its governance against these standards

SIAMS Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools. SIAMS has sought to provide Church schools with a tool for effective self-evaluation and a process of external review which enables continued development. The framework focuses on vision, allowing governing boards to place more emphasis on their purpose in education, ensuring that the school's Christian vision impacts in ways which enable the whole school community to flourish

SIMS Schools Information and Management System – a computer package to assist schools in managing information on pupils, staff and resources, provided by Capita

Special school For pupils with a statement of special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) or an education, health and care plan, whose needs cannot be fully met from within mainstream provision

Sponsor An organisation or person who has received approval from the DfE to support an underperforming academy or group of academies. Examples of sponsors include academies, businesses and charities

School Resource Management Self-Assessment Tool (SRMSAT) A statutory return, providing a means for the governing board in an academy school or multi-academy trust to assess its financial processes, capabilities and skills.

Staff governor/trustee Elected by those who are paid to work at the school, from across the teaching and non-teaching staff. In some academy schools staff trustees are appointed, rather than elected, as defined in the articles

STPCD School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document – an annually published document which forms a part of the contract of all teachers and headteachers in maintained schools in England and Wales. Many academies will also follow the STPCD

Strategic plan The school's strategic document which sets out a small number of key priorities for the school over the next 3-5 years. The governing board should take the lead on developing the strategic plan

STRB School Teachers' Review Body – makes recommendations to the Secretary of State on teachers' pay

Streaming Placing pupils in classes according to their ability across a range of subjects

TA Teaching Assistant

Glossary Guide continued

Teaching schools Schools that receive funding from DfE to work with other schools to provide professional and leadership development, school-led initial teacher training (ITT) and school-to-school support.

Teaching school hubs Led by teaching schools and include schools that are benefiting from support as well as strategic partners

Terms of reference The scope and limitations of a committee's (or individual's) activity and delegated responsibilities

TLR Teaching and Learning Responsibility – agreed payments, defined within the Pay Policy, made to teachers for an additional responsibility

Trust Deed The deed by which a voluntary aided or a voluntary controlled school has been established

Trust School a foundation school. Some schools will need to acquire foundation status in order to become a trust school, meaning they will take on specific responsibilities which have traditionally been carried out by the Local Authority, including:

- Responsibility for overseeing admissions and appeals processes
- Specific requirement for the make-up of the governing board
- Becoming the legal employers of all staff
- Managing the school premises.

Where Trust Schools are different from other maintained schools is that they are supported by a charitable trust. The Trust is made up of partners, community organisations and sometimes businesses, which share and support the strategic direction of the school or schools

UNISON Union of Public Employees. Many school support staff will be members of this union

Virtual school Looked after children are on a virtual school roll, and each local authority will employ an experienced teacher to oversee the educational progress of all children under the care of that particular LA. The virtual school headteacher will have the specialist knowledge to provide extra support to designated teachers in the 'real' schools where the pupils are educated. They will also work with professionals in the Children's Services department of the council and with all schools in the area to promote the education of children in care. Boards have a responsibility to challenge outcomes for children in care within their setting

VA Voluntary Aided A school set up and owned by a voluntary board, usually a church board, largely financed by the LA. The governing board employs the staff and controls pupil admissions and religious education. The school's buildings and land (apart from playing fields) will normally be owned by a charitable foundation. VA schools set their own admissions criteria in line with the admissions code.

Value Added (VA) The progress schools help pupils make relative to their individual starting points – rather than looking at raw results VA also takes into account the prior attainment, thus enabling a judgment to be made about the effect of the school on pupils' current attainment

VC Voluntary Controlled: usually a denominational school wholly maintained by the LA, but with certain residual rights regarding religious worship

Vertical grouping Classes formed (in primary schools) with children of different age groups

Virement The agreed transfer of money from the budget heading to which it has been allocated to another budget heading

Vision The school's vision should, in a few sentences, describe what the school will look like in three to five years' time. The vision will be developed by the board, in consultation with, and with collaboration from, the senior leadership team, staff, parents, pupils and the wider community

Vocational A subject that would not be considered academic in the traditional sense.

The National Coordinators of Governor Services (NCOGS) is a committee representing providers of services to school boards and other governance support professionals. The NCOGS committee is made up of elected representatives from each of the eight regions and is funded through subscription.

NCOGS exists to give a national voice and support to its members, with a view to promoting high-quality governance in schools, academies and free schools. Established in 1992 as a Local Authority (LA) national governor services network, NCOGS has grown and developed representing eight regional networks of governor services, with membership drawn from 142 local authority coordinators of governor services and their traded partners, 27 Catholic and Anglican Diocese, a range of commercial organisations, 30 multi academy trusts and independent providers of governance support services. NCOGS is represented on the Department for Education's Advisory Group on Governance (AGOG). You can find out more about NCOGS on our website, www.ncocgs.org.uk

As regional groups, the COGS exist to support and enable the delivery of high quality services to governors, trustees and clerks, promoting and supporting effective governance in schools. The committee also provides a mechanism for professionals working in governor services to access a range of materials and development opportunities. It is the committee's responsibility to influence and initiate national policy by identifying common themes emerging from the regions and then to communicate the outcomes to support the continuous improvement of governor support services nationally.

Please see the back cover for a breakdown of the areas covered by the eight regions. If you are working as part of an organisation which supports and advises governors, trustees and clerks and would like to hear more about your local group please view the profile for the elected representative for that region on the NCOGS website and make contact by following the email link to that person.

Northern Region (GoverNorth)

Cleveland	Newcastle
Darlington	Northumberland
Durham	North Tyneside
Gateshead	Redcar
Hartlepool	South Tyneside
Middlesbrough	Stockton

West Midlands Region (WMCOGS)

Birmingham	Staffordshire
Coventry	Stoke on Trent
Dudley	Telford
Herefordshire	Walsall
Sandwell	Warwickshire
Shropshire	Wolverhampton
Solihull	Worcestershire

South West Region (SWCOGS)

Bath and NE	Oxford
Somerset	Plymouth
Bath and Wells	Somerset and
Bristol	North Somerset
Clifton	South
Cornwall	Gloucestershire
Devon	Swindon
Dorset	Torbay
Gloucestershire	Wiltshire

Yorkshire and Humberside Region (YHCOGS)

Barnsley	Leeds
Bradford	NE Lincolnshire
Derby	North Lincolnshire
Derbyshire	North Yorkshire
Doncaster	Rotherham
East Riding	Sheffield
Kingston upon Hull	Wakefield
Kirklees	York

Eastern Region (ERCOGS)

Bedfordshire	Norfolk
Buckinghamshire	Northamptonshire
Cambridgeshire	Nottinghamshire
Leicestershire	Peterborough
Lincolnshire	Southend
Luton	Suffolk
Milton Keynes	

South Eastern Region (SECOGS)

Arundel and	Reading
Brighton	Slough
Bracknell Forest	Southampton
Brighton and Hove	Surrey
Chichester	West Berkshire
East Sussex	West Sussex
Hampshire	Windsor and
Isle of Wight	Maidenhead
Kent	Wokingham
Portsmouth	

North West Region (NWCOGS)

Blackburn	Manchester
Blackpool	Merseyside
Bolton	Oldham
Bury	Rochdale
Cheshire East	Salford
Chester	Sefton
Chester West	St Helens
Cumbria	Stockport
Halton	Tameside
Knowsley	Trafford
Lancashire	Warrington
Liverpool	Wigan

London Region (LCOGS)

Barking and	Hounslow
Dagenham	Islington
Barnet	Kingston
Brent	Lambeth
Bromley	Lewisham
Camden	Merton
City of London	Newham
Croydon	Richmond
Ealing	Royal Borough of
Enfield	Kensington and
Fulham	Chelsea
Greenwich	Southwark
Hammersmith	Sutton
Harringay	Waltham Forest
Harrow	Wandsworth
Havering	Westminster
Hillingdon	

