

# Local Governing Body Terms of Reference



**Polaris**  
Multi-Academy Trust

### **Responsibilities of a Local Governing Body (LGB)**

The role of an LGB is an important one. It is to provide focused governance for the academy at a local level. The LGB carries out its responsibilities on behalf of the Trust Board and in accordance with policies determined by the Trust Board.

The act of delegation from the Trust Board to the LGBs is a delegation of powers and duties, and not a delegation or shedding of responsibilities.

### **Named Governors**

The LGB must annually recruit from their population the following roles:

- A governor who is responsible for special educational needs
- A governor who is responsible for pupil premium
- A governor who is responsible for safeguarding

These governors will act as advocates for the pupils through the evaluation of the systems and policies that are designed to support them. In conducting this role, a governor will:

- Ask questions pertinent to their area (although this does not preclude them asking questions in all other areas).
- Visit the academy (at least annually) to meet staff who are accountable for these areas.
- Report on their visits to the full LGB.

### **Training**

- All governors must complete the annual statutory training provided by the trust. This online training must be completed by the end of the first term of the academic year.
- If a governor fails to complete the training, despite at least two reminders they will be removed from their role.
- If a governor is recruited mid-year, they will be expected to complete the statutory training within a 7-week window.
- All safeguarding training completed by an LGB will be recorded on the academy's Single Central Record (SCR).

### **Duties of a Local Governing Body (LGB)**

First and foremost, the duty of a governor is to know and understand the academy they govern. The best way to gain this understanding is to read through meeting papers and pose questions to the Head of School prior to the meeting. The trust will support governors understanding of the education sector by providing training. It is also useful for a governor to visit the academy, to meet the Head of School and tour the academy, during the school day.

The duties below are highlighted as key to successful governance in the Department for Education Governance Handbook.

To implement the educational vision of the Polaris Multi Academy Trust.

- To act on behalf of the community, supporting and celebrating the academy's unique *DNA*.
- To be aware of and consider views of parents, pupils/students, staff, and the wider community that its academy serves and report on these as appropriate to the Directors.
- To have regard to any locally agreed priorities identified by the Trust Board.
- To perform the role of governor on panels as requested by the Trust. This includes attending panels on behalf of their own school and other schools in the Trust.

To support and challenge the Head of School and Senior Leadership Team in equal measure:

- To act as a critical friend to the Head of School and the academy's senior leadership team, being ready to challenge them and hold them to account on the KPIs directed by the trust and detailed in the academy's improvement plan.
- To support the well-being of the Head of School.
- To review and provide feedback on termly reports from the Head of School and consider such reports as the LGB may require.

To ensure there is strong financial oversight and compliance with policy and statutory obligations of the academy and the trust:

- To oversee and control the financial performance of its academy within the limits specified by the Polaris Multi Academy Trust Audit, Risk and Finance Committee, as highlighted by the trust scheme of delegation. An LGB does this through:
  - To monitor the academy's income and expenditure through the academy management accounts.
  - To annually review the academy budget in preparation for its implementation in the upcoming academic year.
  - To provide feedback to the Head of School on the above in LGB meetings.
- To determine (and keep under review) such policies as the trust may delegate to the LGB and to advise the Trust on the impact of Trust agreed policies.
- To take all actions required to comply with statutory regulations / policies and the Master Funding Agreement and Supplementary Funding Agreement including matters relating to safeguarding, student discipline, pupils/student and staff welfare, special educational needs, equality issues generally, sex and religious education (SRE), health and safety and the implementation of charging policies.
- To implement the policies agreed by the Directors and the CEO, regarding pupil admissions.
- To maintain a view of the Academy estate's performance, in regard to Health and Safety, in accordance with any guidelines set out by the Trust.

### **Population of a Local Governing Body (LGB)**

The population of the LGB must be made up of the following. These numbers should be regarded as a minimum, except for the role of staff governor, where only one member of academy staff should be recruited.

- 2 Parent Governors
- 3 Co-opted Governors
- 1 Staff Governor

The Chair and Vice Chair of the LGB must be either a Co-opted or Parent Governor. The Chair or Vice Chair cannot be a staff governor.

### **Sustainability**

To sustain the strong numbers on the LGB and ensure there is succession plan in place to guard against the school's LGB falling below the minimum number, a school can *over recruit* governors. The process of recruiting above the minimum number, must run in accordance with the following:

- Governors are selected based on the skills they bring to the LGB. This selection process can be delegated by the Trust Board to the CEO and Head of School.
- Governors recruited will be assigned as co-opted governors.
- Governors recruited cannot be members of the academy staff.

### **Effective management of the Local Governing Body**

As highlighted above governors should read and ask questions of meeting papers prior to the meeting. This is to enable robust discussion between governors and between governors and the Head of School.

All LGB meetings will be held in line with the NGA code of conduct (see appendix 1). In agreeing to be a governor, governors agree to faithfully abide by it.

### **Quorum**

- To enable meetings to be quorate, there must be at least three governors in attendance.
- The CEO can act as a governor in meetings to ensure quorum and take on the role of Chair where (in the short term) a Chair is not available.

### **Clerking**

- All LGB meetings will be minuted by a suitably qualified clerk.
- The clerk will notify governors when the meeting papers are available on the Trust Governance Portal.
- Governors should notify the clerk via email, with their apologies if they cannot attend an LGB meeting.
- Minutes of LGB meetings are sent to the Chair of the LGB and Head of School for an accuracy review prior to the next LGB meeting, where they will be approved by the LGB.

## **Polaris Multi Academy Trust Governance Code of Conduct**

This code of conduct has been adopted by the trust, all board members agree to faithfully abide by it.

Trustees: We agree to follow the [charity governance code](#)

Those governing at local level: We recognise and support the principles set out in the [charity governance code](#)

### **We will abide by the Seven Nolan Principles of Public Life:**

#### **Selflessness**

We will act solely in terms of the public interest.

#### **Integrity**

We will avoid placing ourselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence us in our work.

We will not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for ourselves, our family, or our friends. We will declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

#### **Objectivity**

We will act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

#### **Accountability**

We are accountable to the public for our decisions and actions and will submit ourselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

#### **Openness**

We will act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information will not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

#### **Honesty**

We will be truthful.

#### **Leadership**

We will exhibit these principles in our own behaviour. We will actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

### **We will apply the highest standards and will:**

Act within our powers

Promote the success of the academy and trust

Exercise independent judgement

Exercise reasonable care, skill and diligence

Avoid Conflicts of interest

Not accept benefits from third parties

Declare interest in proposed transactions or arrangements.

### **We will focus on our core purpose:**

Strategic leadership: defining a vision, fostering a culture and championing the strategy.

Accountability and assurance: providing robust and effective oversight of operations and performance.

Engagement: strategic oversight of relationships with stakeholders.

**As individuals, we agree to:**

**Fulfil our role & responsibilities**

- We accept that our role is strategic and so will focus on our core purpose rather than involve ourselves in day-to-day management.
- We will fulfil our role and responsibilities as set out in our scheme of delegation.
- We will develop, share and live the ethos and values of our trust.
- We agree to adhere to trust policies and procedures.
- We shall fully cooperate with individual requests that are necessary to ensure organisational compliance, such as disclosure and barring or right to work checks.
- We will work collectively for the benefit of the trust.
- We will be candid but constructive and respectful when holding senior leaders to account.
- We will consider how our decisions may affect the trust and local community.
- We will stand by the decisions that we make as a collective.
- Where decisions and actions conflict with the Seven Principles of Public Life or may place pupils at risk, we will speak up and bring this to the attention of the relevant authorities.
- We will only speak or act on behalf of the trust board if we have the authority to do so.
- Trustees: We will fulfil our responsibilities as a good employer, acting fairly and without prejudice.
- When making or responding to complaints, we will follow the established procedures.
- We will strive to uphold the trust's reputation in our private communications (including on social media).
- We will have regard to our responsibilities under [The Equality Act](#) and will work to advance equality of opportunity for all.
- Those governing at local level: We will act as local ambassadors for our trust.

**Demonstrate our commitment to the role**

- We will involve ourselves actively in the work of the board and accept our fair share of responsibilities, serving on committees or working groups where required.
- We will make every effort to attend all meetings and where we cannot attend explain in advance why we are unable to.
- We will arrive at meetings prepared, having read all papers in advance, ready to make a positive contribution and observe protocol.
- We will get to know the school/s well and welcome opportunities to be involved in school activities.
- We will visit the school/s and when doing so will make arrangements with relevant staff in advance and observe school and board protocol.
- When visiting a school in a personal capacity (for example, as a parent or carer), we will continue to honour the commitments made in this code.
- We will participate in induction training, prioritise training in required areas (such as safeguarding) and commit to developing our individual and collective skills and knowledge on an ongoing basis.

### **Build and maintain relationships**

- We will develop effective working relationships with leaders, staff, parents and other relevant stakeholders from our local communities.
- Those governing at local level: We will champion the voices of our school community and stakeholders.
- Those governing at local level: We will establish effective working relationships with trustees.
- Trustees: We will engage with and be accountable to those governing at local level.
- Trustees: We will respect the remit of, and engage constructively with, relevant authorities, sector bodies and other trusts.
- We will express views openly, courteously and respectfully in all our communications with board members and staff both inside and outside of meetings.
- We will work to create an inclusive environment where each board member's contributions are valued equally.
- We will support the chair in their role of leading the board and ensuring appropriate conduct.

### **Respect confidentiality**

- We will observe complete confidentiality both inside and outside of the trust when matters are deemed confidential or where they concern individual staff, pupils or families.
- We will not reveal the details of any governing board vote.
- We will ensure all confidential papers are held and disposed of appropriately.
- We will maintain confidentiality even after we leave office.

### **Declare conflicts of interest and be transparent**

- We will declare any business, personal or other interest that we have in connection with the board's business, and these will be recorded in the register of business interests.
- We will also declare any conflict of loyalty at the start of any meeting should the need arise.
- If a conflicted matter arises in a meeting, we will offer to leave the meeting for the duration of the discussion and any subsequent vote.
- We accept that the Register of Business Interests will be published on the trust's website.
- We will act as a trustee/academy committee member, not as a representative of any group.
- We accept that in the interests of open governance, our full names, date of appointment, terms of office, roles on the trust board, attendance records, relevant business and pecuniary interests, category of governor/trustee and the body responsible for appointing us will be published on the trust website.
- We accept that information relating to board members will be collected and recorded on the DfE's national database (Get information about schools), some of which will be publicly available.

**We understand that potential or perceived breaches of this code will be taken seriously and that a breach could lead to formal sanctions.**