



2025 / 2026

LOCAL GOVERNANCE HANDBOOK



Introduction from the Chair



Local governance matters in our Trust. It is what ensures our schools are rooted in their communities. In order for pupils, staff and schools to flourish and succeed, governance at all levels of the Trust needs to be highly effective. Every layer of governance needs to know what it is responsible for and what it is not. We must avoid gaps, overlaps or grey areas in our governance work. We are committed to having the right people, doing the right things in the right way to support our schools.

Every school will have local governance as an entitlement. This may be delivered through a local or cluster governing committee. Largely advisory in nature, Local and Cluster Governing Committees (LGC/CGC) sub-committees of the Board of Directors. An LGC has oversight of one school. A CGC will have an oversight of 2-4 schools.

Formal Constitution of Local Governance

Governance arrangements are formally constituted in line with the Trust's [Articles of Association](#).

The [Scheme of Delegation](#) highlights where accountability for decision making rests. LGCs/CGCs have responsibilities to review decisions made by leaders regarding exclusions, admissions, and complaints through panel hearings.

Membership of the LGCs/CGCs is outlined in the Trust Articles of Association and includes parents, staff, and community representatives often with specific skills or experience.

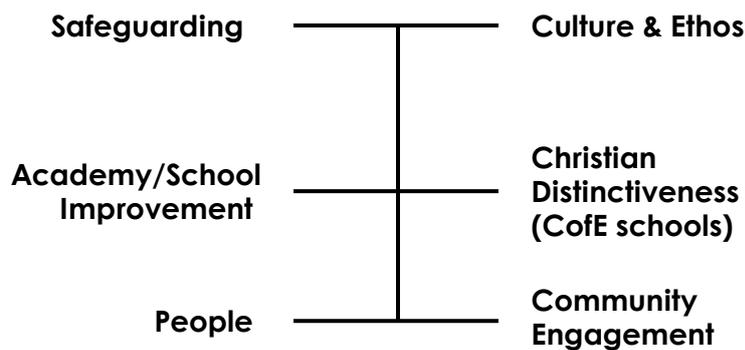


The Role of the LGC/CGC

A Local Governing Committee (LGC) or Cluster Governing Committee (CGC) of a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) is a group of individuals appointed to oversee the performance and strategic direction of one or more schools within the trust at a local level. While the MAT board holds ultimate legal accountability for all schools in the trust, the LGC/CGC play a crucial role in supporting and monitoring individual schools.

The LGC/CGC is a sub-committee of the Board of Directors. They are volunteers who help the trust anchor their school/schools in their community. The work of local governors is outlined through the Terms of Reference (ToR) - see **Appendix A** for further details.

The Board asks LGC/CGCs, through the ToR, to focus on the following areas:



The Role of the Chair of the LGC/CGC

The Chair of the LGC/CGC is appointed by the Board. As a sub-committee of the Board of Directors, they ensure that the board's vision is in line with the Trust's values and support the overall culture and ethos of the organisation.

The Chair will:



Lead LGC/CGC meetings, including ensuring that the terms of reference are understood and adhered to (with the clerk's support)



Ensure members of the LGC/CGC understand their roles & attend Chairs and Directors meetings



Liaise with the clerk and/or trust's Governance Officer regarding membership, including the election arrangements for new governors



Facilitate all school visits by LGC / CGC members



Appointment of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the LGC/CGC



Chairs will be appointed through a process that attempts to reflect the importance of the role with the fact that all governors are volunteers. Chairs will serve a 2 year term. This allows for consistency over 2 school years. After 2 years, if all parties are satisfied, a further 2-year term is possible.

Chairs do not need to be appointed each year from within the LGC membership. Instead, Chairs are invited by the board to continue in their role if they are happy to do so. Where there is a clear rationale for an appointment (such as an unsuccessful partnership), the board will seek to appoint a Chair through a fair recruitment process not precluding the current chair.



Vice-Chairs 'act up' in the absence of the Chair and must be nominated from within the membership of the LGC/CGC and elected by majority vote by the committee. Normally, no-one will continue beyond 4 years in that role. In a CGC this may be a shared post between two governors, each serving from a different school. This decision is at the discretion of the CGC.

Nominations for the role of Vice -Chair should be made in writing, or electronically, to the clerk. LGC/CGC governors can self-nominate for this role.



Appendix B provides an overview of the process, from application to selection. All Chair appointments are ratified at full Board meetings.



Annual Review with the Chair



Everyone, including Chairs, must be satisfied that the working arrangements are effective. The Board needs to be confident that the appointment is working as planned.

Schools and trust leaders need to feel that their LGC/CGC is working as intended. Critically, Chairs themselves need to feel comfortable and confident in their role.

The reviews will simply be a short conversation, most likely virtual between the Governance Officer and Chair of the LGC/CGC. The focus will be on what is going well, what we can help with, and how you are finding the role and responsibilities.

Recruiting and Appointing LGC/CGC Governors

Clerks and/or the trust Governance Officer will support the recruitment processes that are required for varying roles.



Non-attendance at LGC/CGC Meetings



Membership may be removed if any LGC/CGC governor fails to attend a published LGC/CGC meeting without offering an accepted apology for two consecutive meetings.



Meetings

Agenda Setting and Schedule of Meetings

Meetings form the largest proportion of the role, the cycle of business links to the ToR which is reflected in the Headteachers Report.

Each LGC/CGC meets four times per year. Twice in the Autumn and once in the Spring and Summer terms. Meeting agendas and papers are circulated one week prior to the meeting to ensure meetings run efficiently. Papers will be taken as read prior to the meeting without a need to talk through the entire documents during the meeting.

Chairs may add additional agenda items to allow the flexibility to cover localised topics. While accepting that different LGC/CGC will have differing operating models; all meetings should be no longer than 90 minutes, and they will start no later than 18.00.

It is the expectation that LGC/CGC members come prepared with key questions on the papers prepared; Chairs may also ask these questions in advance.





Quorum

The quorum is the minimum number of governors required to be present at a meeting for it to be effective in its oversight. The quorum for LGC/CGC meetings is 3 appointed governors to form meaningful discussions.



School Visits

Areas of focus for governor school visits are:

- Safeguarding
- Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities
- Early Years
- Christian Distinctiveness (for Church schools only)

Whilst some LGC/CGC's may appoint specific governors to champion key areas of school life, any governor is welcome to visit the school to conduct a school visit. The visits look at decisions or improvements for the particular area. Governors do not have to be experts in these areas, nor do these roles carry any additional accountability. Further information can be found in the relevant areas of SharePoint.



Inspections

Schools are subject to Ofsted and SIAMS (Church schools only) inspections to evaluate the quality of education and how effectively the schools Christian vision shapes its ethos.

As part of both Ofsted and SIAMS inspections you may be asked to attend a meeting with the inspectors, however this is usually in conjunction with Directors for Ofsted and primarily involves the Chair only. For SIAMS inspections local governors are more likely to play a part in the inspection particularly as Christian Distinctiveness is a large focus of our LGC/CGC ToR.

School and MAT leaders will liaise with the Chair's to advise regarding the lead inspectors' plans for the inspection. We will provide high levels of support and guidance before any meeting and will ensure governors are clear about feedback mechanisms at the end of any process in any school.





The Role of the Diocesan Director of Education (DDE)

The DDE sits as a corporate member of Rise MAT. The Diocesan Director of Education (DDE) is a statutory role. Aside from the distinct responsibilities of the DDE as corporate member, interactions with Rise MAT and schools are the DDE fulfilling the DBE's statutory role. These include providing advice and support to the CEO, Headteachers, and schools as described below:

- 1** Communicates and supports the Diocese's vision for children and young people through a range of partnerships.
- 2** Supports Church Schools to stand confidently at the heart of the church's mission to children and families across Leicester and Leicestershire.
- 3** Challenges and supports church schools to recruit high quality leaders and deliver highly effective provision for the children and young people they serve.
- 4** Acts as a strategic partner and provider with Local Authorities, Teaching School Alliances, the Regional Schools Commissioner, the Department for Education, and the Church of England Education Office.
- 5** Develops closer working relationships between the DBE and other Diocesan Boards, committees, and agencies.
- 6** Advises the Bishop on educational matters from General Synod, the Church of England Education Office, Department for Education and Local Authorities.
- 7** Deals with all issues regarding academies, including initial advice for governing bodies.



School Improvement Committee (SIC)

A School Improvement Committee (SIC) is a group within a school or a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) that focuses on driving and overseeing strategies to raise educational standards and improve outcomes for pupils. Members are appointed by the Board of Directors, a large proportion of which will have expertise in education and/or leadership.

The Board of Directors may temporarily dissolve the LGC/CGC and suspend the Scheme of Delegation and form a School Improvement Committee (SIC). A SIC may be required for a variety of reasons such as a weak inspection, internal MAT level evaluation which identifies declining outcomes, weak leadership, or limited school improvement happening, or capacity to deliver on this.

The SIC will subsume the role of the LGC/CGC in the short to medium term. The Board of Directors will decide how and when to re-establish the LGC/CGC, considering any recommendations provided by the CEO and/or Director of Education. The SIC will monitor progress against the MAT/school agreed improvement plan and validate evidence of the impact of actions taken.

Expectations for Governors (Rise MAT Code of Conduct)

Rise is a value driven trust. How we do what we do matters. All LGC/CGC members are expected to agree to abide by our code of conduct (**Appendix A**). Acceptance of the code by the LGC/CGC should be discussed and noted in the minutes of the first meeting of the autumn term each year. The code refers to both the Nolan Principles and is also drawn from the National Governors Association (NGA) 2021 Ethical Code.



Transitional Arrangements

Where schools have established good working models of cluster governance, and these are demonstrably effective, a transition plan will be drawn up in agreement with the Director of Education to allow for a natural transition to the new model over the course of twelve months.

This will include substantial training and support for LGC/CGC members. Good and effective cluster governance is defined as:

- An agreed model of governance, in line with the scheme of delegation
- Fully quorate meetings during the last academic year (remote or face to face)
- Good representation from Foundation, Parent and Staff governors from across all schools Robust minutes demonstrate high levels of challenge and accountability
- An effective Headteacher reporting strategy



Appendix A

LOCAL GOVERNORS CODE OF CONDUCT





1. Aims, Scope and Principles

This policy aims to set and maintain standards of conduct that we expect all local governors to follow. By creating this policy, we aim to ensure that local governors carry out their role with honesty and integrity and help us to ensure our schools are an environment where everyone is safe, happy, and treated with respect.

The code has been adapted from the NGA 2021 ethical code of governance. It should be read alongside our constitutional documents (e.g. our articles of association, and the scheme of delegation).

Please note, this code of conduct is not exhaustive. If situations arise that are not covered by this code, Directors/local governors will use their judgement and act in the best interests of the trust and its pupils.

2. The 7 Nolan Principles of Public Life

As a Local Governance Committee/Cluster Governance Committee we agree to abide by the Seven Nolan Principles of public life:

- **Selflessness** – we will act in the public interest
- **Integrity** – we will not act or take decisions to gain financial or other material benefits for ourselves, our family, or our friends. We will declare any conflict of interests
- **Objectivity** – we will act and take decisions impartially, fairly, and on merit. We will use the best evidence and avoid discrimination or bias
- **Accountability** – we understand that we are accountable to the public for our decisions and actions. To make sure of this, we will be scrutinised where necessary
- **Openness** – we will act and take decisions openly
- and transparently. We will not withhold information from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for doing so
- **Honesty** – we will be truthful
- **Leadership** – we will actively promote and support the above principles and will challenge poor behaviour wherever it happens.



3. Core Function

As a Local Governance Committee/Cluster Governance Committee we will focus on our core governance functions:

- Ensuring there is clarity of vision, ethos, and strategic direction
- Ensuring the voices of stakeholders are heard
- Understanding the effectiveness of your school/s
- Supporting and challenging school leaders, to secure planned improvements



As a Local Governance Committee/Cluster Governance Committee, we will:

- Agree to fulfil our role & responsibilities to the Board of Directors
- Accept that our role is strategic and so will focus on our core functions rather than involve ourselves in day-to-day management
- Fulfil our role and responsibilities as set out in the scheme of delegation/terms of reference
- Develop, share, and live the ethos and values of our school/s
- Agree to adhere to school/trust policies and procedures as set out by the relevant governing documents and law
- Work collectively for the benefit of the school/s
- Be candid but constructive and respectful when supporting and challenging school leaders
- Consider how our decisions may affect the school/s and local community
- 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, speak up and bring this to the attention of the relevant authorities
- Only speak or act on behalf of the Board if we have the authority to do so
- Fulfil our responsibilities, acting fairly and without prejudice
- When making or responding to complaints follow the established procedures
- Strive to uphold the school's/trust's reputation in our private communications (including on social media)
- Not discriminate against anyone and will work to advance equality of opportunity for all



4. Working with Others

To build and maintain relationships, individually and collectively, we will:

- Develop effective working relationships with school leaders, staff, parents, and other relevant stakeholders from our local community/communities
 - Express views openly, courteously, and respectfully in all our communications with board members and staff both inside and outside of meetings
 - Support the chair in their role of leading the committee and ensuring appropriate conduct
 - Work to create an inclusive environment where each committee member's contributions are valued equally
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5. Commitment to Governance

To demonstrate our commitment to the role, as individual LGC/CGC governors, we will:

- Involve ourselves actively in the work of the committee, and accept our fair share of responsibilities, serving as an advocate or working groups where required
- Make every effort to attend all meetings and explain in advance why we are unable to
- Arrive at meetings prepared, having read all papers in advance, ready to make a positive contribution and observe protocol
- Get to know the school/s well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in school activities
- Visit the school/s and when doing so will make arrangements with relevant staff in advance and observe the school and committee protocol
- When visiting the school in a personal capacity (for example, as a parent or carer), continue to honour the commitments made in this code
- Participate in induction training, undertake mandatory training and take responsibility for developing our individual and collective skills and knowledge on an ongoing basis



6. Openness and Transparency

In declaring conflicts of interest and being transparent, individually, and collectively, we will:

- Declare any business, personal or other interests that we have in connection with the LGC/CGC business, and these will be recorded in the register of business interests
- Also declare any conflict of loyalty at the start of any meeting should the need arise
- Should a conflicted matter arise in a meeting, offer to leave the meeting for the duration of the discussion and any subsequent vote
- Accept that the Register of Business Interests will be published on the school/trust's website
- Act in the best interests of the school/trust as a whole and not as a representative of any group
- Accept that in the interests of open governance, our full names, date of appointment, terms of office, roles on the governing committee, attendance records, relevant business and pecuniary interests, category of governor/trustee and the body responsible for appointing us will be published on the school/trust website
- Accept that information relating to committee members will be collected and recorded on the DfE's national database Get Information About Schools (GIAS), some of which will be publicly available
- Understand that potential or perceived breaches of this code will be taken seriously and that a breach could lead to formal sanctions





7. Confidentiality

To respect confidentiality, as individual LGC/CGC governors, we will:

- Observe complete confidentiality both inside and outside of school when matters are deemed confidential or where they concern individual staff, pupils or families
- Not reveal the details of any LGC/CGC vote
- Ensure all confidential papers are held and disposed of appropriately. We will maintain confidentiality even after we leave

Breaches of confidentiality

In the event of a breach of confidentiality, we will inform the chair as soon as possible who will investigate the matter further. Local governors understand that if they breach confidentiality, they may be suspended or removed.

8. Data Protection

We will follow the trust's information security processes and measures and data protection policy when using, storing, sharing and disposing of personal data.

Our commitment to data protection does not overrule our duty to report child protection concerns to the appropriate channel where we believe a child is at risk of harm.

Personal data breaches

We will inform the trust's data protection officer immediately if we believe there has been a personal data breach.



9. Social Media

Abide by any requirements set out in our trust's social media policy. We will:

- Uphold the reputation of the trust at all times
- Maintain a professional presence online and carefully consider how we interact with our schools' communities
- Review privacy settings regularly to make sure we are happy with the information about us that is publicly available
- Report any incidents of harassment we experience, or see towards Directors/local governors, to the chair of Directors/the local governing body and the executive leadership

Guidelines for Parent Governors Using Messaging Apps

- Note what the group is being used for, ie:
- Sharing school updates
- Have appropriate boundaries regarding discussions within the group. Keeping messages relevant to the group's purpose
- Always communicate respectfully and professionally. Avoid using offensive language or making personal attacks
- You must not share personal information about students, parents or staff
- Respect the confidentiality of school matters. Sensitive issues should be discussed in private meetings, not in group chats.
- Be aware of any legal implications, such as data protection laws

By following these guidelines, parent governors can use WhatsApp groups and other messaging apps effectively, fostering a positive and productive communication environment.

We will not:

- Disclose any information which is confidential or would breach data protection principles
- Make comments online about any members of the board of Directors/local governors or school communities
- Post any inappropriate/offensive language, images or comments on social media that may bring us or the trust into disrepute



10. Monitoring Arrangements

This code of conduct will be reviewed and agreed annually, upon significant changes to the law, or as needed. It will be ratified by the full board of Directors/Local Governors.



11. Links with other Policies

This policy links with our policies:

- Safeguarding
- Gifts and hospitality
- Data Protection





12. Breaches of the code of conduct:

Local/Cluster governing Committees:

If we suspect a local governor has breached the code of conduct, we will follow this procedure:

- A Trustee/Director will investigate
- A Trustee/Director will hold a meeting with the local governor to discuss the issue. The local governor can bring a friend to the meeting. Another local governor will attend to corroborate any decisions
- If the situation doesn't improve, or there is another suspected breach, we will take action to improve the issue.

This may involve:

- Further meetings with the trustee to reset expectations, based on this code of conduct Support, mentoring or training for the local governor
- Making sure the local governor withdraws from votes connected to any disputes they have been involved in

If there is no improvement in the local governor's behaviour, the board will vote on a motion to ask the members to remove them in accordance with the trust articles of association. This is a last resort and will not be used without the above steps being taken, except in exceptional circumstances.

Local governors may be suspended if they:

- Have acted in a way that is inconsistent with the professional ethos of the board of Directors/local governors (including failing to undertake training appropriate to the role, whether directed to do so by the board)
- Have brought, or is likely to bring the academy trust or the office of the trustee into disrepute, or
- Acted to undermine fundamental British values or the board's commitment or ability to deliver on its Prevent Duty

Local governors may be removed where:

- There have been repeated grounds for suspension
- There has been serious misconduct. We will determine what counts as serious misconduct based on the facts of the case, but it will include any actions that compromise the 7 principles of public life, if sufficiently serious
- They display repeated and serious incompetence
- Their actions are significantly detrimental to the effective operation of the board, or their actions interfere with the operational efficiency of the school



12. Breaches of the code of conduct:

'Bringing the board/local committee into disrepute' may include, but is not limited to:

- Speaking out publicly against the school
- Being disrespectful to members of the school community
- Behaving inappropriately in a public forum, such as a PTA meeting or on social media
- Persistently failing to undertake the training or development they need to contribute effectively to the board's operation

As Chair of Governors, I confirm that the committee understands the agreed Code of Conduct and will alert Rise Multi-Academy Trust of any concerns or support needed to ensure all governors uphold these principles.

Signed:

Date:

This Code of Conduct will be reviewed annually at the first meeting of each year. A copy will be filed with the minutes locally, with the trust and digitally online.



Appendix B – Appointment of the Chair of the LGC/CGC

The Chair of the LGC/CGC is appointed by the Board of Directors. They are responsible for oversight of all the work of the LGC/CGC. Attendance of the Chair at LGC/CGC meetings is expected. However, in exceptional circumstances, the Vice-Chair can take the chair for a meeting.

Each year the Chair will be invited by the Board to remain in the role for another year. If the current Chair does not wish to continue in this role, there will be an opportunity to invite applicants through a fair recruitment process.

The Leicester Diocesan Board of Education recommends that clergy or employees of the Trust do not serve as Chair of Governors.

If there is a vacancy or a pending vacancy, the LGC does not need to nominate. Potential applicants are invited to apply using the Chairs application form, returning this to the Trust via the Governance Officer. Applicants will be invited to visit the school to meet the Headteacher and a member of the Trust's Senior Leadership Team. Nominated people will be interviewed by a member of the Trust's Senior Leadership Team with the preferred candidate being recommended for appointment to the Board of Directors.

If there are no suitable candidates, the Trust may undertake a recruitment process to find a Chair from outside of the committee for the LGC/CGC.



Glossary

Academy – A state-funded school that operates independently of the local authority and is run by an academy trust.

Attainment – The level a pupil reaches, often measured through assessments and examinations, such as SATs or GCSEs.

Baseline Assessment – An initial assessment of a pupil's skills and knowledge when they start school, used to measure progress over time.

CPD (Continuing Professional Development) – Ongoing training and development for teachers and school staff to enhance their skills.

Curriculum – The subjects and content taught in schools, including what pupils are expected to learn in each subject.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) – A senior staff member responsible for safeguarding and child protection in the school.

EAL (English as an Additional Language) – Refers to pupils whose first language is not English.

EHCP (Education, Health and Care Plan) – A legal document outlining the support provided for a child with significant special educational needs or disabilities.

ELG (Early Learning Goals) – Targets for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), typically up to the age of 5.

Exclusions – When a pupil is removed from school, either temporarily (known as a suspension) or permanently.

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) – The first stage of education in primary school, covering children from Nursery to Reception. It sets out how young children learn and develop through play, exploration, and structured activities.

FSM (Free School Meals) – A measure often used to identify disadvantaged pupils for funding and support purposes.



Glossary

Good Level of Development (GLD) – A measure used in the EYFS to indicate that a child has met expected standards in key areas of learning.

Governing Body / Governing Board – A group of volunteers who oversee the strategic direction and performance of a school.

HLTA (Higher Level Teaching Assistant) – A teaching assistant with additional training who can support learning more independently or cover lessons.

Inclusion – Ensuring all pupils, regardless of background or need, have equal access to education and opportunities.

Inspection (Ofsted) – The evaluation of schools in England by the Office for Standards in Education, focusing on the quality of teaching, leadership, and pupil outcomes.

Key Stages (KS1, KS2) – The stages of the national curriculum, divided by age:

- KS1: Ages 5–7
- KS2: Ages 7–11

LAC (Looked After Children) – Children in the care of the local authority.

Local Authority (LA) – The local council responsible for education services in its area.

MAT (Multi-Academy Trust) – A group of academies governed by one trust and board of directors.

Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education) – The national inspection body that evaluates the quality and effectiveness of schools in England.

PE and Sport Premium – Government funding provided to improve physical education and sport provision in primary schools.

Pupil Premium – Additional funding given to schools for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds, aimed at helping to close the attainment gap.



Glossary

Progress – The improvement pupils make over time, often measured against national expectations.

Provision Map – A tool used to plan and monitor the support provided to pupils with additional needs.

Rise+ Pupils – Pupils who may face additional challenges in education, often eligible for Pupil Premium funding.

Safeguarding – The policies and procedures in place to protect children from harm and ensure their welfare.

SATs (Standard Assessment Tests) – National assessments taken by pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 in primary school.

School Development Plan (SDP) / School Strategic Plan (SSP) – The school's strategic plan for improvement, often reviewed and monitored by governors.

SEF (Self-Evaluation Form) – A document in which school leaders evaluate the school's strengths and areas for improvement.

SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) – Pupils who require additional support due to learning or physical needs.

SENCO (Special Educational Needs Coordinator) – A staff member responsible for coordinating provision for pupils with SEND.

SIAMS (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools) – An inspection assessing how effectively the school's Christian vision shapes its ethos, curriculum, and the wellbeing and development of pupils.

Target Setting – The process of setting academic and other goals for pupils to achieve.
Teaching and Learning – The core activities of the school, focusing on how teaching is delivered and how pupils learn effectively.



Glossary

Transition – The process of moving between different phases of education, such as from primary to secondary school.

Value for Money (VfM) – Ensuring that school resources are used effectively and efficiently to maximise outcomes for pupils.

Wellbeing – The mental, emotional, and physical health of pupils and staff, which is increasingly a focus of school priorities.



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