



The Diocese of St Albans Multi-Academy Trust

Governance Framework

Mission, Vision and Values

Governance Overview

Scheme of Delegation

Scheme of Financial Delegation

Sept 2022 Update



1. The Underlying Principles for this Governance Framework

- Ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction at both Trust and local governance level
- Enable everyone in the Trust to do the right thing, in the right way, for the right people, in a timely, open, honest and accountable way
- Local governance retains the ability to drive schools forward with their headteacher
- Accountability and responsibility are clearly defined so that there is a shared, practical understanding across the Trust
- Meeting flows and linkages provide for effective communication, participation and consultation
- Roles and responsibilities are so defined that duplication is avoided
- Delegated decision-making powers are clearly defined and understood by all levels of governance
- Reporting structures bottom-up and top-down are both defined and effective
- Practice is in line with the Trust's Articles of Association and the Academies Handbook

2. Our Mission, Vision and Values

The Trust has a clear **mission** at its core, ensuring that all pupils are enabled to flourish, rooted in God's Love - academically, socially, spiritually, physically and mentally. This is central to our work and rooted in our Christian foundation (John 10 v 10). Our commitment to mutual flourishing within the school community is built upon our shared belief in Church of England principles. In our Trust, just as in the wider Church of England community, 'flourish' refers to prospering, thriving and growing – not shrinking out and dying. It means prayerfully encouraging all within our schools so that they might prove fruitful, successful and contented in the longer term. We seek to provide space generously for all to flourish in life and all of its structures. Equitable treatment for all pupils, staff and the wider community is a core part of enabling this long term, holistic flourishing.



We have a clear **vision** about creating successful schools for the benefit of their communities. We expect any school in the Trust to continuously improve, and those graded by OFSTED as RI/Serious Weaknesses/Special Measures to make rapid progress and be able to secure an OFSTED grading of at least “Good” within 3 years post-conversion (COVID delays permitting external validation of these outcomes). All schools provide rich and diverse curricula which evolve to meet the needs of their children and local communities, as well as delivering educational excellence to enable them to continue to flourish in later life.

The way we work and deliver against our mission is critical to our Trust. We have shared, agreed **values** of:

Hope; Nurture; Equality; Respect; Collaboration

The Trust's vision is underpinned by a Christian values framework which is adopted by all schools. It provides clear expectations for all Trust employees on how we wish our values to impact on all areas of school life. It draws on, and is informed by, the National Church of England Vision for Education and the Diocesan Board of Education Vision.

Each school within the Trust has a personalised vision for education, developed locally to reflect the individual character and needs of the school community. This vision is underpinned by the Trust's wider vision, and agreed with the Trust, but it is owned and driven by the headteacher and their Local Governing Board.

3. The Trust's purpose

- Deliver outstanding education, with a distinctively Christian ethos, leading to high achievement and progress for all of our pupils
- Ensure that vulnerable children are nurtured and cared for, and that they are able to flourish
- Care for our pupils and staff, so that they are safe and their wellbeing is a priority



- Inspire a love of learning for all pupils through the provision of a tailored, rich and wide curriculum
- Enable our schools to work together to share knowledge, experience and expertise, for the benefit of our learning community
- Enthuse school staff by providing them with access to learning opportunities and helping them to flourish
- Help school leaders to drive continuous improvement and raise aspirations
- Deliver great governance which has a positive impact upon the outcomes, progression and care of all
- Be cost effective, ensuring that funding is maximised for the benefit of our learning community

4. The Trust's Community

The Trust is dedicated to delivering education that serves local communities. Our academies are inclusive, welcoming those from all and no faiths, from all abilities and backgrounds. We believe in providing a high-quality education, underpinned by Christian values, which enables every child to flourish.

Underpinning all of the Trust's work is a belief in educational excellence. The Trust serves all stakeholders by providing academies with the highest levels of academic rigour and pastoral care.

Our academies are places where children and young people develop and thrive intellectually, socially, culturally and spiritually. All of the Trust's schools teach a broad and balanced curriculum within national guidelines focusing on core skills. This is designed to ensure that all pupils reach their academic potential and seek to enrich their experience along the way. Pupils will be enabled to succeed in an atmosphere of high expectation, aspiring to educational excellence with a firm foundation of values.

5. Trust Governance

The Trust Board are responsible for the vision, strategic direction and compliance with the statutory or regulatory requirements of the Trust.

The Board of Directors delegate responsibility for delivery of the vision and strategy to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), who is also the Accounting Officer. The Board of Directors hold the Chief Executive Officer to account for the performance of the schools within the Trust.



The Chief Executive Officer in turn works with the Education Director and Local Governing Bodies (LGBs) to drive up standards, providing support, challenge and oversight to the work of the school headteachers. In rare circumstances, where the Trust Board has concerns about the experience or numbers of governors in a school, Trust schools in the Trust may be asked to share a governing body with other schools. Specific responsibilities concerning the performance of each school are delegated to LGBs.

The Chief Executive Officer reports to the Board of Directors on the performance of the Trust including the performance of the schools within the Trust, which is also supplemented by a cycle of monitoring. This is recommended to the CEO by the Director of Education, and approved by the CEO, following approval from the Board of Directors.

The key elements of the Governance Structure are:

a) The Members

The Members of the Trust are the first signatories to the Articles of Association which set out the Trust's charitable object and governance structure. They are guardians of the Trust's vision and values, and custodians of governance in the Trust. The Diocesan Board of Education is a corporate member of our Trust. The Chair of Directors is also a member, but is the only Director to sit on both Boards

b) Trust Board

The Trust Board meet half termly and employ a committee structure to ensure that all duties and responsibilities are appropriately undertaken, and that there is a high level of support and challenge for the Trust. Committees' membership and Terms of Reference are reviewed each year to ensure that the focus of the Board is consistently refreshed to meet DSAMAT need, and that they support the delivery of annually agreed Board Priorities. The Board also appoints a link Director for key areas of work. In 2022/23 these are identified for Safeguarding, Ethos and SEND.

Committee Chairs feedback directly to the Trust Board at each full Directors' meeting; minutes of all meetings are shared on GovernorHub for permanent reference and appear on the agenda at the following Board meeting.

Local Governing Boards (LGBs) report to the Trust Board or its Committees through the CEO, the Chairs' Network and through the minutes of LGB meetings and an 'open' invitation to contact the Board at any time.



Effective reporting and liaison through open engagement at all levels of Trust governance are seen as key to the success of the structure.

c) Local Governing Board (LGB)

LGBs are committees of the Trust Board and have delegated decision-making powers in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation within this document. They drive the local Christian vision for each school and are responsible for ensuring that the school continues to flourish, with support from the wider Trust. They work with parents and the wider community to ensure that each school is at the heart of the community and reflects the evolving needs of the stakeholders in the local area.

All governing boards are built on skillset and include at least two parents of school aged children. LGBs must have a Safeguarding link governor and should also endeavour to have a finance lead and SEND link. Governing body members are expected to support and promote the Christian ethos in Church schools, and values of the Trust in all DSAMAT schools. In Church schools, at least two LGB members are specifically appointed as ‘Foundation’ members with responsibility for upholding the Academy’s historic Christian foundation. Whilst LGBs are mostly focussed on individual schools, some policies enable governors from one school to support another for investigations and support. Where this is possible, it is clearly stated within a policy. All governors are encouraged to share good practice within the Trust and beyond, whilst maintaining the confidentiality of each school, their staff and pupils. There are half termly, online Chairs’ network meetings in place to ensure that this is facilitated, as well as termly network meetings for Safeguarding link governors.

Central team members liaise with LGB Chairs and governors in many ways:

- Sharing news and information with Chairs via email
- Meeting with Chairs remotely each half term
- Attending Board meetings with headteachers on a rota basis
- Liaising with at Link Director meetings
- Supporting network and training for core governance roles, such as Safeguarding and SEND
- Providing guidance, support, compliance meeting notes and education reports to all LGB Chairs



Whilst the Trust's central team do not normally attend LGB meetings, they are able to do so in exceptional circumstances. LGBs are also able to commission reports and specific triangulation work from the specialists in the central team where this agreed to be useful and practicable.

All governors are encouraged to share good practice within the Trust and beyond, whilst maintaining the confidentiality of each school, their staff and pupils.

d) Governance Operations

Clerking

LGBs work with the Trust to identify, employ and support the work of a clerk. The Trust Governance Manager ensures that the work of the clerks is consistent, and quality assured across the Trust. Clerks liaise on a regular basis to facilitate sharing best practice, common processes, required systems and documentation and to provide each other with support, guidance and assistance when needed. The Trust Governance Manager ensures that the clerks to the LGBs are provided with up-to-date information regarding best practice in education and governance.

Meeting Schedule

The CEO is responsible for overseeing the meeting timetable for all governance meetings for the academic year in collaboration with the Trust Governance Manager and LGB chairs/clerks. This is approved by the Board of Directors and identifies the core expectation across the Trust. Additional meetings and content are able to be planned directly with the LGB.

Meeting agendas and minutes

The Clerk of each LGB will have available a standard meeting agenda template. Local Chairs and LGBs may add to this in order to meet the needs of their local community and school. Minutes should be stored securely by the Clerk, shared on GovernorHub.

Reports to the Trust Board



Common systems, Procedures and Documentation

To enable the governance of schools to operate consistently and in accordance with the Trust's Governance Framework, the Trust disseminates templates and content for the following documentation:

- a) agendas
- b) meeting minutes
- c) terms of reference
- d) annual calendar of business
- e) Leadership report
- f) performance appraisal documents
- g) policy schedule

This documentation will be reviewed annually in the summer term by the Trust Governance Manager and will be made available for the start of the new academic year.



6. Roles and Responsibilities

a) Members

Members have responsibility for the Articles of Association (the documents that set out the rules under which the Trust must operate). The Articles of Association describe how members are recruited and replaced, and the basis on which the Members appoint Directors to the Trust Board. The Members may remove Directors if they fail to fulfil their responsibilities. Accordingly, the Trust Board submits an annual report on the performance of the Trust to the Members. Members are responsible for approving any amendments made to the Trust's Articles of Association.

b) Directors/Trustees

*Directors of the Trust are bound by both charity **and** company law, therefore the terms 'Trustees' and 'Directors' are both used in the pursuance of business. 'Directors' is used throughout this document to provide clarity.*

The Directors are responsible for the management of the Trust in accordance with the provisions set out in Articles of Association.

They:

- ensure clarity of the Christian vision, ethos and strategic direction
- hold the Chief Executive Officer to account for the educational performance of the schools and their pupils, and the management of staff
- oversee the financial performance of the Trust and ensure value for money
- ensure statutory and regulatory requirements are met within schools across the Trust

The Trust Board delegate to the CEO responsibility for the day-to-day operations of the Trust and for holding the Trust Central Team and LGBs to account for operational performance by reference to monitoring reports and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).



The Trust Board have responsibility for reviewing and, where necessary amending the governance structure, which includes changes to the Scheme of Delegation. The Trust Board must ensure that the organisation has the necessary skills and that all the directors, governors and staff are appropriately trained. The Trust Compliance Manager oversees the arrangements for skills audits, reviews and subsequent training programmes designed to ensure that Trust governance is well advised and fit-for-purpose.

c) Local Governing Boards (LGB)

The Trust Board delegate responsibility to the LGBs for each school as outlined in this document. Governors are responsible for:

- ensuring clarity of the local, vision, ethos and strategic direction, including in Church schools the Christian ethos
- holding school senior leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and the pupils, and the effective and efficient management of staff
- overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent
- proposing a budget to the Trust Board on behalf of the school

d) Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

The CEO is the Accounting Officer so has overall responsibility for the operation of the Trust's financial responsibilities and must ensure that the organisation is run with financial effectiveness and stability, avoiding waste and securing value for money.

The CEO leads Trust's Central Team and leads strategic and operational work. The CEO is accountable to the Trust Board for the performance of the Central Team.

e) Headteachers

Headteachers are responsible for the day-to-day management of their school, supported by the strategic leadership of the LGB, taking account of the Scheme of Delegation and the Scheme of Financial Delegation. Their work is supported and guided by the Director of Education and Deputy Chief Executive (DCEO) and their teams, but overseen and managed by the LGBs.



Decision-Making Matrix

The Diocese of St Albans Multi-Academy Trust promotes a culture of consultation and collaboration across the organisation. Whilst the tables overleaf show where the action or responsibility for each activity lies, it is expected that key leaders across the Trust will be involved in a process in order to achieve the best outcome for our community.

Please note that Local Governing Board and/or Headteacher delegation may, in extreme circumstances, be passed to the CEO of the Trust. Where this occurs, the Trust Board will be in agreement and the local leadership informed. The intention will always be to resume standard delegation as soon as possible’.

Decision	Delegation				
	Members	Trust Board	Chief Executive Officer	LGB	Headteacher
Leadership, Wellbeing and HR					
Ensure that the Trust and all schools demonstrate equality, diversity and inclusion and operate within relevant employment legislation and comply with safeguarding requirements		✓			
Appoint/remove Members	See Note* on p17				
Role descriptions for Members	✓				
Appoint/remove Directors	✓				
Ratify the appointment/removal of Chair and Vice Chair of Trust Board	✓				
Role descriptions for the Trust Board		✓			
Identify skills within the Trust Board, addressing gaps through recruitment and/or training		✓			



Decision	Delegation				
	Members	Trust Board	Chief Executive Officer	LGB	Headteacher
Set pay scales, based on benchmarking for CEO, DCEO and headteachers		✓			
Agree and review non-leadership Trust Central Team pay scale			✓		
Agree and review non-leadership Trust Central Team pay awards			✓		
Agree and review headteacher pay awards			✓		
Recruit, appoint, suspend and remove the CEO		✓			
Undertake Performance Appraisal of CEO including pay progression		✓			
Recruit, appoint, suspend and remove the DCEO		✓			
Undertake Performance Appraisal of DCEO including pay progression			✓		
Recruit and appoint Trust Central Team members			✓		
Recruit and appoint the leadership of the Trust Central Team		✓			
Undertake performance appraisal of central Trust staff including pay progression			✓		
Monitor the performance of LGBs in fulfilling their responsibilities and accountabilities		✓			
Appoint local governors			✓		
Remove local governors			✓		
Appoint Chair of LGB			✓		
Remove Chair of LGB			✓		
Code of Conduct and model role descriptions for all members of LGB			✓		
Identify skills within the LGBs, addressing gaps through recruitment and/or training				✓	
Approve the annual pay award for all school staff		✓			
Approve any school restructuring which results in redundancy			✓		



Decision	Delegation				
	Members	Trust Board	Chief Executive Officer	LGB	Headteacher
Recruit, appoint suspend and remove the headteacher			✓		
Undertake performance appraisal of headteachers including pay progression			✓		
Recruit, appoint, suspend and remove members of school senior leadership teams					✓
Undertake Performance Appraisal of senior leaders including pay progression					✓
Establish, review and monitor appropriateness of the staff structures within each school			✓		
Recruit and appoint school-based staff according to pre-agreed structure					✓
Undertake performance appraisal of staff including pay progression					✓
Appoint and remove Clerk			✓		
Systems and Structures					
Review and agree Articles of Association	✓				
Establish and review Trust Board committees and their terms of reference annually		✓			
Approve schools joining the Trust	✓				
Review Governance Framework annually		✓	✓		
Agree annual schedule of business for Trust Board		✓			
Annual self-review of Trust Board		✓			
Carry out 360 review Board's performance annually		✓			
Succession planning of Trust Board		✓			
Agree Trust wide annual schedule of business for LGB			✓		
Audit arrangements for matters of compliance e.g. safeguarding, H&S, employment		✓			
Annual self-review of LGBs including a skills audit				✓	



Decision	Delegation				
	Members	Trust Board	Chief Executive Officer	LGB	Headteacher
Succession planning for LGBs				✓	
Agree Trust Board agendas and minutes		✓			
Agree LGB agendas and minutes				✓	
Statutory Reporting					
Hold an annual general meeting	✓				
Publication of all required details on governance arrangements of the Trust Board		✓			
Publish annual report and financial accounts		✓			
Publication of all required details on governance arrangements of the LGB				✓	
Publish statutory reports on website in line with DfE requirements e.g. pupil premium, sports premium, safeguarding				✓	
Ensure the Trust website is compliant with DfE requirements			✓		
Ensure school website is compliant with DfE requirements				✓	
Make changes to the admissions criteria of a school		✓			
Make changes to the PAN of a school		✓			
Make changes to the age range of a school		✓			
Business Strategy					
Produce the Trust strategic plan which will include a statement of the Trust's mission, vision, and values		✓			
Agree Trust key priorities and key performance indicators (KPIs) against which progress towards achieving the vision can be measured		✓			
Approve and monitor the school strategic plan which will include a statement of the school's			✓		



Decision	Delegation				
	Members	Trust Board	Chief Executive Officer	LGB	Headteacher
vision and values					
Approve and monitor the school's key priorities and key performance indicators (KPIs) against which progress towards achieving the vision can be measured			✓		
Determine Trust-wide policies which reflect the Trust's vision and values. These will include school admission arrangements		✓			
Determine school level policies and procedural documents which reflect the school's and the Trust's ethos vision and values				✓	
Establish Trust risk register, and review and monitor termly		✓			
Establish school risk register, and review and monitor termly				✓	
Establish and review a Trust business continuity plan		✓			
Establish and review a school business continuity plan				✓	
Approve annual budget plan		✓			
Approve three-year medium-term forecast		✓			
Approve an estates management strategy for the Trust		✓			
Approve an IT strategy for the Trust		✓			
Approve an IT strategy for a school				✓	
Agree the academic year (term dates) and the hours of the school day				✓	
Agree INSET and occasional days				✓	
Make significant changes to school buildings		✓			
Educational standards					



Decision	Delegation				
	Members	Trust Board	Chief Executive Officer	LGB	Headteacher
Design and implement a school curriculum					✓
Ensure the Trust schools' curricula meet the needs of the Trust and legal requirements			✓		
Ensure the school curriculum meets the needs of the school community				✓	
Develop, implement, and maintain, a unique Christian vision for education in line with Trust principles and local context (Church Schools)				✓	
Consider the suspension or permanent exclusion of a pupil within a Trust school					✓
Review the process of suspensions or permanent exclusions				✓	
Across the Trust monitor and evaluate overall effectiveness of the quality of standards in education		✓			
Agree, monitor and evaluate the school development plan within delegated budgets				✓	
Monitor and evaluate the school evaluation form				✓	
Establish the format and content of the CEO's report		✓			
Establish the format, content and themes of Leadership reports			✓		
Ensuring Financial Probity					
Establish and review Trust's scheme of financial delegation:		✓			
Monitor, review and amend as necessary the Trust's actual financial performance against budget throughout the year and at year end		✓			
Monitor, review and amend as necessary the school's actual financial performance against budget throughout the year and at year-end				✓	



Decision	Delegation				
	Members	Trust Board	Chief Executive Officer	LGB	Headteacher
Appoint external auditors	✓				
Appoint responsible officer		✓			
Ensure compliance with external auditors' report		✓			
Approve and monitor Trust-wide procurement strategies and efficiency programme		✓			
Establish and review appropriate and robust insurance cover for the Trust and its schools		✓			

* Members can only be appointed, removed and replaced with the consent of the Diocesan Corporate Member (the Board of Education), in accordance with the Articles of Association



7. Schedule of Financial Delegation

The approvals set out below should be followed in all cases. They are to be used in conjunction with all expenditure included within the final budget you presented to your LGB, submitted to the DCEO, which in turn was approved by the Board of Directors and submitted to the ESFA. If you do not have individual budget holders, this approval level would revert to the Headteacher.

If you find an additional spend is required, which is outside of the scope of your approved budget and would have an adverse effect on your approved balance, you must raise this in the first instance with the Trust Finance Manager and explain the rationale for the additional spend. An internal process will then be triggered involving the DCEO, CEO, LGB and possibly FP&O depending on the size and impact of the unapproved budget spend.

With regards to procurement, please note that where a contract spans more than one year, the limits below must be applied to the total value of the contract rather than the per annum cost.

1a) Purchasing – school-based finance

Process	Value	Delegated Authority
		Approval
2 quotes required	Over £1000 and up to £10,000	Budget holder/SLT
3 quotes required	Over £10,000 and up to £30,000	HT
Formal Tender process	Over £30,000	DCEO
Formal Tender process	Over £50,000	FPO
Payments		Authorisation
Invoices	Up to £1000	Budget holder/SLT
Invoices	Over £1000 and up to £10,000	Budget holder/SLT
Invoices	Over £10,000 and up to £30,000	HT
Invoices	Over £30,000 and up to £50,000	DCEO
Invoices	Over £50,000	FPO



1b) Purchasing - Trust Central finance

Process	Value	Delegated Authority
		Approval
2 quotes required	Over £1000 and up to £10,000	DCEO
3 quotes required	Over £10,000 and up to £30,000	DCEO
Formal Tender process	Over £30,000	DCEO
Formal Tender process	Over £50,000	FPO
Payments		Authorisation
Invoices	Up to £1000	TFM
Invoices	Over £1000 and up to £10,000	TFM
Invoices	Over £10,000 and up to £30,000	TFM
Invoices	Over £30,000 and up to £50,000	DCEO
Invoices	Over £50,000	FPO

2a) Payroll

Each school's payroll is reviewed by the Business Lead and approved by the Headteacher on a monthly basis. For Trust Central Team, payroll is reviewed by the Trust Finance Partner and approved by the Trust Finance Manager on a monthly basis.

Payroll is administered by EPM (the Trust's HR provider) and paid to all staff via BACS.

2b) Headteacher expenses and mileage claims

Headteachers to send expenses and mileage claim forms to Trust Finance Manager for approval before BAC's run is processed and/or payroll is processed depending on the payment method.



2c) All staff expenses and mileage claims

All staff to follow process as per the DSAMAT Finance Manual

3) Writing off Bad Debt

Value	Delegated Authority				Requirements
	Approval		Authorisation		
	For schools	For central team	For schools	For central team	
Up to £1000	HT	TFM	LGB	DCEO	All decisions should be minuted in board meetings with a clear paper trail for audit. A copy of the minutes should be passed to the DCEO for audit purposes. All reported to F&O on a termly basis.
£1,000 to £10,000	HT	DCEO	LGB	CEO	
Above £10,000	LGB	CEO	FPO	FPO	

4) Disposal of Surplus Stock & Assets

Value	Delegated Authority				Requirements
	Approval		Authorisation		
	For schools	For central team	For schools	For central team	
Up to £1000	HT	TFM	LGB	DCEO	All decisions should be minuted in board meetings with a clear paper trail for audit. A copy of the minutes should be passed to the DCEO for audit purposes. All reported to F&O on a termly basis.
£1,000 to £10,000	HT	DCEO	LGB	CEO	
Above £10,000	LGB	CEO	FPO	FPO	

5) Bank Account Management

	Delegated Authority		Requirements
	Prepare	Approve	
VAT Returns	TFP	TFM	



Bank Reconciliations	TFP	TFM	To be completed at least monthly
Funding Reconciliations	TFP	TFM	To be completed at least monthly
Budget Forecast return	TFM	CEO	See Finance Handbook for further details

6) Approval of Returns and Registers

	Delegated Authority		Requirements
	Prepare	Approve	
Register of Business Interests	Clerk	Trust Governance Manager	To be updated at least annually
Gifts and Hospitality Register	Academy Business Lead	LGB	To be completed as and when required
Funding Reconciliations	TFM	DCEO	To be completed at least monthly
Business Continuity Plan – Schools	Business Lead	LGB	To be updated at least annually
Business Continuity Plan – Central team	DCEO	ARC Committee	To be updated at least annually