

# Pickwick Academy Trust



## Local Governance Committee

## Governors' Handbook



September 2024

## Welcome from the Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

Congratulations on becoming a school governor at one of the schools that is part of Pickwick Academy Trust. All of the Trust's schools are primary schools and we are a mixture of community and church schools.

I am writing to welcome and thank you for agreeing to take on this responsibility and for giving your time so freely.

Pickwick Academy Trust greatly values the contribution professional volunteers make to the governance of our schools. Your role is critical in raising the standards of achievement of our pupils and improving their well-being and life chances.

The Local Governance Committee (LGC), Executive Team and Trust Board will provide information, training and support, which I hope you will find useful. Please call on them as often as you wish.

Being part of a thriving school and getting to know the staff and children will be an enjoyable experience. You will have the opportunity to make a valuable contribution to the school's future development and success which I am confident you will find very rewarding.

Thank you again for volunteering – it is very much appreciated.

James Passmore



Chief Executive Officer

Pickwick Academy Trust

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## Our Vision, Strategy, Mission and Values

### Pickwick Academy Trust - Our Vision

Our vision is to work together to provide the **best schools and outcomes** for our children.

### Pickwick Academy Trust - Our Strategy

- **Harness our collective expertise** to drive school improvement and realise the best for all children and adults working and learning in our schools
- **Celebrate and communicate the successes** in our schools to encourage aspiration and innovation
- **Provide support and challenge** for each school so that every child meets their full potential
- **Recognise and celebrate each school's uniqueness**, and the enduring Christian distinctiveness of our church schools, valuing all members of our Trust family

### Pickwick Academy Trust - Our Mission

- **Team:** We work together as an inclusive family so that each school is supported and held to account for the attainment and progress of every child to enable them to meet their full potential and to ensure the highest quality teaching and leadership for our children.
- **Approach:** We provide robust support and challenge for each school on its individual journey of improvement, seeking common-sense solutions from within and outside our Trust.
- **Celebrate:** We celebrate the successes and unique characteristics of each school, valuing all children and encouraging aspiration and innovation for all, providing systems that support opportunities for those working and learning in our schools.
- **Together:** We share responsibility and harness our collective expertise, experience and spirituality to drive school improvement and achieve the best possible outcomes for all by sharing ideas, resources and best practice to ensure all schools within our Trust are successful.
- **Future:** We are committed to sustainable growth, to provide the best outcomes for the communities we serve now and in the future by aligning and resourcing central services and succession planning to ensure investment remains in quality teaching, learning and leadership.

### Pickwick Academy Trust - Our Values

Our vision, strategy and mission is underpinned by our moral purpose to provide the best education and curriculum for the children we serve, and is based on the values of: **aspiration; collaboration; inclusion; enjoyment** and **nurturing relationships**, with the intention of empowering children to become life-long learners, global citizens and deep thinkers. We provide a strong ethical framework that enables children to make thoughtful, positive choices, and are committed to providing a high quality and educationally stimulating learning environment, led by exceptional and dedicated staff.

**About this handbook**

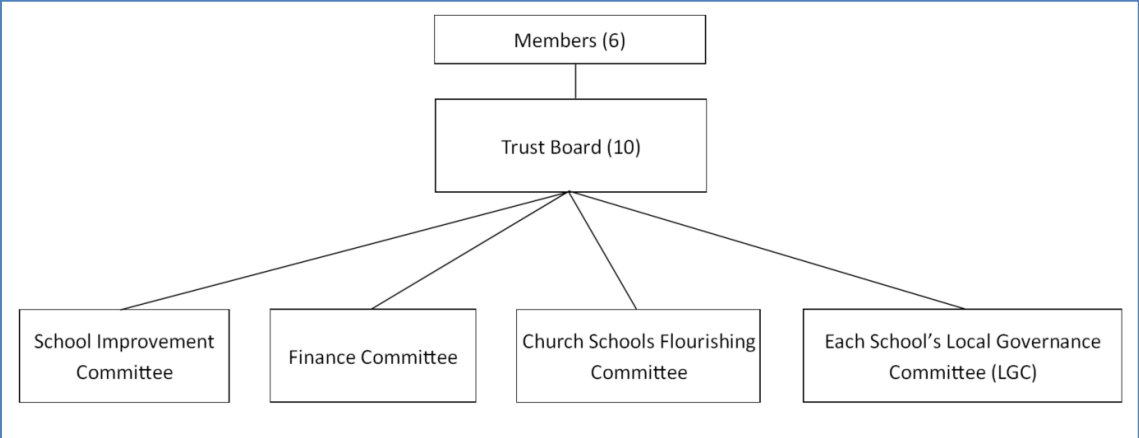
This handbook is designed to give general advice on school governance, and specific advice and information about Pickwick Academy Trust. It should be read in conjunction with the Trust’s Scheme of Delegation and associated appendices.

Many of you are experienced governors, leaders and staff in schools and are familiar with governance, but perhaps not with the specific requirements of being a Local Governance Committee (LGC) member. This handbook is intended as an introduction and a reference guide whatever your current role and level of experience. We hope that you will find the information useful.

Pickwick Academy Trust believes that effective governance should take into account knowledge of the whole school and its community. Successful governance depends on strong communication and collaboration.

**What is a Local Governance Committee?**

A Local Governance Committee (LGC) is a committee of the Trust Board and is responsible for providing support and challenge to a specific school around vision, ethos, curriculum, standards and pupil experience.



A traditional Local Authority maintained school Governing Body is the statutory accountable Governing Board of its school, but in a Trust the Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) Board is the statutory Governing Board of all its academies.

The LGC is delegated responsibility via the Scheme of Delegation and works alongside the Trust Board to carry out specific functions. Please see our Policy Approvals document which sets out which policies are ratified by each layer of governance, and our Scheme of Delegation Summary which describes how responsibilities for governance are delegated across the different layers of governance in the Trust.

## What are the roles and responsibilities of Local Governance Committees?

The governors' role is to both challenge and support the leadership of the school to ensure that the agreed direction and vision for the school is delivered. Governors need to be aware of the progress the school is making through regular reviews and discussion. This needs to be regular, rigorous and supported by data. It also needs to be set into the context of each cohort and of cohorts over time. Governors need to be aware of the challenges that the leadership is facing and of the measures being taken to meet these challenges. Support and challenge is crucial to identify and mitigate risks and also to enable the flow of reliable information and intelligence about the school's operation and performance within Pickwick Academy Trust.

The governors need to publicly support the direction of Pickwick Academy Trust and the actions agreed at LGC meetings even when these may prove difficult and/or unpopular. The Chair of Governors and the LGC have a role in the performance management of the Head (*Head may refer to Head of School, Headteacher or Executive Headteacher depending on the context of the school*) but also in supporting the leadership of the school in delivering effective performance management for all members of staff. The Head needs the support of the LGC to ensure high quality teaching and learning throughout the school and must be able to rely on this in challenging circumstances.

The LGC is also responsible for looking after the well-being and mental health of the Head and should actively promote a sensible work life balance for the Head and throughout the school. The relationship between the LGC and the Head should be a positive one. The governors are responsible for succession planning for the Head and need to ensure that the role of leader in their school is an attractive one which will bring a strong field of candidates when the time comes for the current Head to move on. To ensure that this is the case, governors need to make sure that they see their role as being supportive of the leadership of the school and that the challenge they regularly make is to be sure that they are fully informed and able to provide that support as the need arises.

The Ofsted and SIAMS inspection frameworks firmly link effective governance with effective leadership of the school. Both need to be good to achieve a good or better grade from the inspection.

The Local Governance Committee is a strategic body that has the best interests of the school and the local community at its heart. Its core functions are:

1. Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction of the school
2. Holding the Head to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils
3. Providing support to monitor school expenditure

These functions should be fulfilled in partnership with the Trust, with specific reference to the details contained in the Scheme of Delegation and summary of roles and responsibilities.

For Church Schools, the LGC has an important role in monitoring that the enduring Christian distinctiveness is secured through appropriate arrangements with particular reference to:

1. Religious designation
2. Governance
3. Collective worship and RE
4. Leadership
5. Chaplaincy
6. Relationship with the local Church of England community and DBE

Good governance in all types of schools is characterised by a focus on six core strategic functions:

1. **Strategic leadership** that sets and champions vision, ethos and strategy.
2. **Accountability** that drives up educational standards
3. **People** with the right skills, experience, qualities and capacity.
4. **Structures** that reinforce clearly defined roles and responsibilities.
5. **Compliance** with statutory and contractual requirements.
6. **Evaluation** to monitor and improve the quality and impact of governance.

These functions are reflected directly in the Ofsted and SIAMS inspection frameworks and will be used by inspectors when considering the effectiveness of leadership and management of the school. Governors must make themselves familiar with the Ofsted and SIAMS inspection handbooks; by doing so you will understand how the effectiveness of senior leaders is judged **alongside** the effectiveness of school governance. Every inspection report will contain an explicit comment on the quality of a school's governance in light of the criteria set out in the inspection handbooks. Where governance is weak in a school that 'requires improvement', inspectors may recommend an external review of governance arrangements.

It is also a key responsibility of governors to support the Trust Board Trustees and CEO when they:

- Appoint a new Head for the school
- Undertake the Head's appraisal

## **Strategic Direction**

Setting the strategic direction of a school involves a number of things:

- Developing and reviewing the long-term vision for the school
- Agreeing priorities, aims and objectives

- Signing off policies, plans and targets for achieving them
- Checking regularly on progress
- Reviewing the strategic framework regularly
- Preserving the ethos and uniqueness of the school
- Preserving and developing the religious character of the school (in the case of a church school)
- Ensuring the school is conducted in accordance with its founding documents and the vision and mission statement of the Trust.

## **Working with the Trustees and Central Pickwick team**

The Trust Board of Trustees and LGCs work closely together. LGC Chairs meet regularly with the Trust's Chief Executive Officer (CEO). The CEO, Chief Finance & Operating Officer, Directors of Education and/or Trustees can attend LGC meetings, and governors can attend Trust committee meetings.

LGCs are required to submit reports/minutes to the Trust, via Governor Hub, giving details and data on standards in their school, and reporting on activity and ways in which they have supported and challenged the leadership.

Local Governance Committees are accountable to the Trust Board. Our governance processes are reviewed regularly to ensure schools and school leaders are getting the support and challenge they need. A schedule of training for new and existing governors is in place, as well as the opportunity to shadow experienced governors and share best practice.

Where a school is deemed by the Trust Board to be in challenging circumstances (safeguarding issues; outcomes below national expectations; ineffective or new leadership/governance, not preserving the religious character of a Church School) the Trust Board and Executive team will provide additional support and challenge, and a Trustee and/or Executive team member may attend LGC meetings. For church schools, the Trust works alongside the SDBE in this regard. The Trust Board may decide to enact its 'Schools in Challenging Circumstances' Committee, and in exceptional circumstances has the power to remove the delegated local governance responsibilities.

## **Strong governance occurs where governors:**

- Clearly understand their roles and responsibilities and how they differ from those of the Head, senior staff, Trustees and Members (see Scheme of Delegation and summary of roles and responsibilities)
- Have in depth knowledge about the achievement of pupils and the quality of teaching in the school (including Pupil Premium, Disadvantaged Learners, catch up and groups)
- Feel confident that the information they have about their school is robust and accurate (triangulation of information is important for governors)

- Understand they need to reach the right balance of professional support and challenge for the Head and senior staff to help them improve the school's effectiveness
- Use their time efficiently
- Know how to make best use of the skills and expertise of all members of the local governance committee
- Evaluate their own effectiveness and how and when they could do things better
- Have allocated time to review their own performance regularly
- Ensure they plan their own training and development
- Consider what might be needed when governors leave and how they would ensure they continued to have the necessary skills and knowledge
- Ensure they have a strong understanding of the latest Ofsted and SIAMS inspection frameworks
- Ensure that members of the local governance committee are prepared to step into important roles such as the chair of the LGC and chairs of panels or working parties
- Work together interdependently and fully benefit from each governors' experience and expertise

## **The composition and constitution of the LGC**

- The Local Governance Committee consists of between 6 and 9 governors for non-Church Schools and up to 11 for Church Schools (to ensure an appropriate balance of foundation and non-foundation local governors). It is up to the LGC to decide how many governors it needs to carry out its duties.
- One third or more of governors should be elected from the school's parent body
- Up to one third of governors can be staff members (The Head is automatically one of these members and is a voting member of the LGC)
- One third or more of governors should be appointed from the community (these members are co-opted on to the LGC because of their specific skills, interests or experience; these governors could also be parents of children at the school)
- For Church of England schools which were previously Voluntary Aided, a majority of governors must be foundation, and appointed by the SDBE (staff cannot be appointed as foundation local governors)
- For Church of England schools which were previously Voluntary Controlled, at least 25% must be foundation, and appointed with the approval of the SDBE (staff cannot be appointed as foundation governors)
- The LGC may appoint up to 2 additional people as associate members usually to assist with specific projects or provide expertise (associate members attend meetings of the LGC but will not form part of the quorum for meetings and may not vote on any matters).
- At least 3 governors with voting rights are needed for meetings to be quorate.



- Where votes on any matter are split equally in order to facilitate efficient decision making, the initial vote of the Chair will carry increased weighting this giving the Chair the casting vote.
- LGCs will not operate sub-committees, but working parties can be created to support the development of particular projects or activities.

## **Duties of the Local Governance Committee**

The Trust Board delegates the strategic oversight of the school to the LGC with the following duties:

### **Vision and Accountability**

- The LGC will be expected to carry out the Trust Board's vision, in a way which is appropriate to the specific ethos and community characteristics of each school. Each school should produce a clear vision statement for publication to all the stakeholders for the school
- The LGC will ensure that the Christian distinctiveness of Church Schools, and the ethos and uniqueness of all schools, is cherished and celebrated
- The LGC will be expected to comply with statutory regulations, policies, procedures and decisions of the Trust Board
- The LGC will be expected to implement the policies set by the Trust Board (detailed in our Policy Approvals document), for example policies regarding admission, safeguarding and health and safety
- The LGC has oversight of the school's activities and is expected to hold the school leadership to account for academic performance, safeguarding, the quality of care, ensuring a strong theological underpinning (in Church Schools) and provision for the pupils' experience at the school

### **Budgets**

- Responsibility for all aspects of financial management, planning and budget monitoring is held at Trust Board level and implemented by the Executive Team and school leaders
- The LGC will receive a summarised annual budget plan and regular budget monitoring reports from the School Business Manager / Trust Head of Finance
- The LGC will provide support to monitor school expenditure in accordance with the appropriate authorisations

### **Staffing**

- The LGC and Head will advise the Trust Board and the Executive Team regarding staffing provision and will make requests to address challenges
- The Trust Board is responsible for the appointment of the Head and may take an active role in the appointment of other members of the school's leadership team.

Where such vacancies arise, the LGC should contact the CEO for specific advice and support. The CEO will keep the Trust Board informed

- The Trust Board is responsible for the dismissal of the Head in line with HR procedures
- The LGC and Senior Leadership Team (SLT) at the school will be responsible for discussing and recommending strategic changes to the staffing structure, in line with the Trust's staffing direction, to the Executive Team. Staffing policies are set by the Trust Board and schools are expected to implement these
- Other school staff are appointed by the SLT and Executive Team. It is advised that three interviewees are involved in posts above MPR 6 and no fewer than two for all other posts. Governors should be involved in the recruitment process for staff with Teaching and Learning Responsibility (TLR) points or other senior leader posts in the school. The LGC may also decide to be involved in other appointments if considered appropriate
- The LGC will support Trust development by enabling staff to be released to support development projects within, across or outside our schools, and/or delivery of Trust business designed to limit incurring central costs.

### **Curriculum**

- The LGC will establish curriculum policies in line with the overarching curriculum guidance provided by the Trust Board. The LGC will monitor the policies' implementation.
- Governors need to be fully aware of the Ofsted and SIAMS frameworks and the requirements of the curriculum, and be able to articulate the school's curriculum intent, implementation and impact plans

### **Performance Management (appraisal)**

- The Chair of the LGC will advise the CEO regarding the Head's appraisal with support from an external adviser appointed by the Trust Board. Heads across the Trust will come together to ensure that performance targets are in line with Trust Board priorities. Remuneration for the Head is considered by the Trust Board Remuneration Committee following recommendations from the Chair of Governors and CEO
- Through the LGC remuneration panel, governors will support Heads to make teacher appraisal pay recommendations which will be approved/declined by the Executive team.

### **Target Setting**

- Guidance on published performance target setting procedures is provided by the DfE on an annual basis. Governors are expected to be familiar with this information in order that they can ask appropriate questions to senior leaders in the school
- The LGC will be responsible for setting and publishing targets for pupil achievement and ensuring these are available for members of the community. Pupil achievement

targets should be set and approved in the autumn term LGC meeting this should include ambitious targets for that academic year ahead and projections for the following academic year as well. These targets should be sent to the Trust Board by the end of the first week of December each year.

### **Pupil Discipline/ Exclusions**

- The LGC will be responsible for the establishment of a behaviour policy for the school which is in line with best practice nationally and which encourages positive behaviour in the school. It will also monitor the use of both fixed term and permanent exclusions.
- The LGC will need to decide whether or not to confirm all permanent exclusions and fixed term exclusions where a pupil is either excluded for more than 15 days in total in a term or the exclusion would mean that the pupil would miss a public examination (Statutory Assessment Test = SATs). All exclusions will be reported to the Trust Board.

The LGC will establish a panel of at least three governors to consider each decision by the Head to permanently exclude a pupil from the school and either confirm the Head's decision or direct reinstatement. The CEO must be consulted before a decision is made. In making this decision, the panel should be mindful of the impact of their decision on the individual pupil, on the pupils in the school in general and on the Head's responsibility to maintain good order and safety in the school. The decision to exclude a pupil must be seen as lawful, reasonable and fair – please refer to the document School Exclusion; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-exclusion>)

For full details of the Head's and Governors' responsibilities for exclusions please read the above.

### **Admissions**

- The Trust Board usually adheres to the Admissions Policy applying to schools within the Local Authority (LA). The LGC may wish to consider amendments to the (LA) policy if they feel it does not best fit the needs of its local community. If this is the case the LGC must discuss its proposed changes with the CEO before final approval by the Trust Board.

### **Collective Worship**

- Where the school does not have a religious character, the LGC will be responsible for the arrangements for collective worship. For Church Schools, the Trust Board will have responsibility for the arrangements for collective worship and RE, but this may be delegated to the LGC.

### **Premises and Insurance**

- Responsibility for all aspects of premises management and insurance is held at Trust level

## **Health and Safety**

- The LGC will ensure the Trust Board's Health and Safety Policy and its supporting procedures are in place.
- The LGC may wish to appoint a governor with link responsibility for health and safety, but as the Trust plays a leading role in this, the LGC does not need to have a named H&S governor.

## **School Organisation**

- The LGC will be responsible for the structure of the school day and for the arrangements for school lunches, being mindful that nutritional standards are being met.

## **Information for Parents**

- The LGC will be responsible for ensuring that there are good arrangements in place to provide information to parents, and will attend and/or lead consultation meetings. The DfE have published the information that should be available for parents and carers on school websites
- Governors are expected to undertake an annual audit of the web-site to ensure the school is compliant with DfE expectations
- The LGC will be the first port of call for parents raising concerns about the leadership of the school

## **Church Schools**

In Church Schools, foundation governors will:

- Take an active role in the school's self-evaluations of progress against the SIAMS schedule
- Ensure that collective worship and religious education at the school follow appropriate guidelines and/or syllabus
- Ensure the collective worship and religious education at the school are appropriately monitored
- Ensure that collective worship at the school is in accordance with the tenets and practices of the Church of England
- Make sure that the School Improvement Plan includes a strategy for the development of areas reflected in the school's SIAMS self-evaluation document
- Ensure that the distinctive Anglican and Christian ethos of the school is encouraged and supported through its local community and is reflected in its policies and protocols, its curriculum and activities
- Encourage, support and challenge the school towards aspirations that are transformational
- Preserve and strengthen the links between church, school and diocese

- Support and challenge the leadership within the school in their links with the wider parish(es) and community and to promote support for school activities and initiatives relating to its Christian distinctiveness and effectiveness
- Fully support, cherish, preserve and develop the distinctive Anglican and Christian ethos of the school, ensuring that the school has a distinctive Anglican and Christian vision and values which lead to effective practice and outcomes
- Ensure that their own attitudes and behaviour in relation to the school reflect its distinctive Anglican and Christian ethos
- Inform the diocese when the Headteacher post becomes vacant and, in partnership with the Chair of Governors, invite a representative of the Diocesan Director of Education to advise and attend throughout the appointment procedures

### **LGC Procedures**

- The LGC will establish and maintain a register of Governors' financial interests and regularly check that there are no conflicts of interest (Pecuniary Interests Form). The LGC will also approve and set up a Governors expenses scheme if it requires one.
- Governors should act in the best interests of the school and the Trust at all times. There is a Pickwick Academy Trust Code of Conduct for governors (at the end of this handbook). The act of taking up the role of governor within Pickwick Academy Trust, automatically assumes adherence to the Code of Conduct, and as such governors understand that action may be taken if there is a breach to the Code.
- The Trustees of the Trust Board reserve the right to withdraw delegated powers from the LGC and/or reorganise it at any time.

On appointment each governor should read and agree to comply with:

- Pickwick Academy Trust's Scheme of Delegation
- Pickwick Academy Trust's Local Governance Committee Handbook
- The Governors Code of Conduct (at the end of this handbook)
- NGA Governor Induction Handbook (available from NGA Governor Support website:
  - <https://www.nga.org.uk/Guidance/Legislation,policies-and-procedures/Government-advice-and-guidance/Governors-Guide-to-the-Law.aspx>
- Pickwick Academy Trust's Induction Policy
- Pickwick Academy Trust's Handbook
- The written undertaking to uphold the Objects of the Trust
- And any terms of reference for panels or working parties which may apply to that governor.

Governors will be expected to carry out training and take part in regular self-review. Governors should take charge of their own training both individually and as a team. The Trust Board will provide specific training to governors but otherwise LGCs should commission training according to their needs.

## **Roles and Responsibilities of Governors**

The appointment of the Chair and the Vice-Chair of Governors of each LGC will be ratified by the Trust Board annually. In the absence of the Chair, the Vice-Chair will lead the meetings of the LGC and take "chairs action" if necessary. At a meeting where neither the Chair nor the Vice-Chair is present the LGC will elect a Chair from those present for the duration of that meeting as long as it remains quorate.

### **Role of the Chair and Vice-Chair of Governors**

The Chair of the LGC is responsible for the efficient running of governors' meetings. They will liaise with the clerk to the LGC and the panel or working party Chairs to ensure that agendas and associated papers are prepared in good time and circulated before the meeting. This should, as a minimum, be 7 days. It will be the expectation that governors will have read the papers before the meeting to contribute to the effective and efficient government of the school. Ideally no meeting of the LGC should exceed two hours and it is the Chair's role to ensure proper discussion and participation within this timescale.

The Chair will be expected to meet regularly with the Head and establish a professional working relationship with the Head and the Senior Leadership Team of the school.

The Chair of Governors is expected to meet with the Chief Executive Officer regularly throughout the year to report on and review the school's overall performance. This may be through formal 360 review meetings which include the Head, via attendance at the School Improvement/Finance Committee meetings or via Chairs Forum meetings.

### **Role of the Clerk to the Governors**

The LGC is responsible for the appointment of the clerk to the governors. This is a crucial role for the smooth running of the LGC. Not only should the clerk prepare agendas and circulate papers under the guidance of the Chair of Governors, they are also responsible for the efficient preparation of minutes of the meetings and their circulation. The clerk will need to maintain a register of interests of governors and keep careful details of attendance, absence and apologies to enable the Chair to monitor the commitment of each Governor.

A copy of LGC meeting minutes will need to be uploaded onto Governor Hub. The clerk will be expected to be familiar with this 'Local Governance Committee Handbook' and the terms of reference prepared by Pickwick Academy Trust and provide advice to the Chair and the LGC on proper procedure for all aspects of their work.

The Clerk may assist in ensuring that the election process for Parent/Carers governors is carried out correctly and may be expected to support the disciplinary process by taking minutes as required. Arrangements for these events may, however, vary from school to school.

### **Governors with Additional Responsibilities**

Individual governors will be asked to take responsibility on behalf of the LGC for the oversight of key aspects of the life of the school. Each governor will work with the school and provide reports to the LGC and Trust Board on their link area. These **must** include:

- Special educational needs and disabilities
- Safeguarding and online safety
- The allocation and effectiveness of pupil and sports premiums
- Curriculum
- SIAMS (Church schools)
- Christian distinctiveness (Church schools)

LGCs may also want to nominate a school improvement, finance, health and safety, staffing, vision and values, and/or wellbeing link governor role (but these are not required link governor roles)

### **The SEND Governor**

The governor with responsibility for Special Educational Needs (SEND) will be expected to liaise with the Senior Leadership Team and the SEND Coordinator as their key focus area during visits to the school. The SEN Governor should know how the children with SEND are identified and how this is used to ensure that pupils with SEND receive the help they need to access the curriculum and participate in the full life of the School. The SEND Governor should organise regular meetings with the SEND Co-ordinator and focus on SEND issues during School visits. With the Heads, the SEND Governor should be able to report back to the LGC on the work being done in this area and inform the LGC of any issues that might arise.

### **The Safeguarding (including online safety) Governor**

The LGC needs to be satisfied that proper safeguarding procedures are in place as part of the safeguarding policy which should meet statutory requirements. It is the role of the governor with responsibility for safeguarding to take an interest in this area and keep the LGC up-to-date on changes or issues that might arise, supported by the Head.

Ofsted have noted in the past that good practice includes:

- high-quality leadership and management that makes safeguarding a priority across all aspects of a school's work

- stringent vetting procedures in place for staff and other adults
- rigorous safeguarding policies and procedures in place, written in plain English, compliant with statutory requirements and updated regularly; in particular, clear and coherent child protection policies
- child protection arrangements that are accessible to everyone, so that pupils and families, as well as adults in the school, know who they can talk to if they are worried
- excellent communication systems with up-to-date information that can be accessed and shared by those who need it
- a high priority given to training in safeguarding, generally going beyond basic requirements, extending expertise widely and building internal capacity
- robust arrangements for site security, understood and applied by staff and pupils
- a curriculum that is flexible, relevant and engages pupils' interest; that is used to promote safeguarding, not least through teaching pupils how to stay safe, how to protect themselves from harm and how to take responsibility for their own and others' safety
- courteous and responsible behaviour by the pupils, enabling everyone to feel secure and well-protected
- well thought out and workable day-to-day arrangements to protect and promote pupils' health and safety
- rigorous monitoring of absence, with timely and appropriate follow-up, to ensure that pupils attend regularly
- risk assessment taken seriously and used to good effect in promoting safety

The Safeguarding Governor will work with the designated child protection member of SLT to support the development of outstanding practice. The Trust Board's Safeguarding Policy is a matter for the whole LGC and the Safeguarding Governor will ensure that other governors are properly informed of the key issues.

The Safeguarding Governor must ensure that all members of the LGC are aware of Keeping Children Safe in Education and their statutory responsibilities.

The Safeguarding Governors can liaise with the Trust Board's Safeguarding Link Trustee

### **The Pupil Premium and Disadvantaged (Social Mobility) Governor**

This governor should monitor the effectiveness of the use of the Pupil Premium and ensure that the LGC is informed of progress and issues related to this, in particular impact on pupil progress and achievement. Guidance on good practice in spending pupil premium money can be found in DfE document "The Pupil Premium: how schools are spending the funding successfully to maximise achievement".



## **Curriculum Link Governor**

Ofsted has changed its focus when inspecting schools and is now much more focussed on the quality of the curriculum: its intent; implementation; and impact, and how well leaders and teachers can articulate this. There is concern within the DfE and Ofsted that a strong focus on the delivery of English and Maths has narrowed the curriculum for pupils within the primary sector. It is important the curriculum link governor has a strong understanding of the school curriculum, what pedagogy sits behind it and how teachers are planning for and delivering carefully designed skills and knowledge progression within the classroom. The governor needs to understand how the school is monitoring the impact of the curriculum on pupil outcomes across key stages including the Early Years Foundation Stage, as well as the approach used by the school regarding the Sex Education Policy.

The curriculum link governor is expected to disseminate their findings to the LGC using the expertise within the school to formulate appropriate conclusions. This governor should be ready to speak to Ofsted or other people monitoring the schools performance; an in-depth knowledge and understanding is fundamental to this role.

## **Local Governance Committee Meetings**

Meetings of the LGC should be purposeful and effective, and make efficient use of the time that volunteer governors generously give to support the school.

All governors must respect confidential items, and take collective responsibility for confidentiality. All governors have a responsibility to consider the needs of all children, not just their own. There is an expectation that all LGC members undertake some governor training each year.

The LGC should meet at least six times a year. Each meeting should be no longer than 2.5 hours (if a meeting runs over it should be stopped and a further meeting arranged).

At least three governors with voting rights are required for meetings to be quorate.

Along with the standard items for each meeting (please see example agendas on the Trust's governance calendar) there should be:

- Reports from any panels or working parties (should they be used)
- Reports from the SEND, Curriculum, Safeguarding, SIAMS / Christian distinctiveness (church schools) and Pupil/Sports Premium Governors if applicable
- Report from the Chair on any actions taken in the interim period
- The Head's report (which will also be submitted to the Trust Board). This report will generally be the main agenda item and should embrace the key issues that governors will need to assess the progress of the School (see below).
- Identification of risks to safety and welfare, operational performance including the development and monitoring of mitigating actions.

- No AOB items should be tabled at LGC meetings – all matters must go through the Chair; individuals can request an item to be added to the agenda in good time (ideally 7 days before the meeting) to allow the issue to be itemised for governors to consider before the meeting.
- Agree items to be escalated to the Trust Board

Governors should become familiar with the key data sets which show them how the school is performing. This will include the Data Dashboard which provides a simple and accessible visual representation of key performance data. It is anticipated that the Head's report to governors will include reference to and training in the more complex data.

At every LGC meeting there should be an update on pupil achievement, including attendance and exclusions. There are key questions for governors to ask about any data they are presented with regarding school improvement.

- What does it mean?
- Why is it like this?
- What are we doing about it?
- How successful have we been so far?
- What are the plans/strategies for improving that?
- How shall we monitor that progress is being made and that leaders are held appropriately to account?

The LGC will meet at specific times of the year and the governors should expect to be able to gauge progress in the school from one meeting to the next. In order to do this, governors need to ask:

- Where were we at the last report?
- Where are we now?
- What progress we have made?
- What issues are still outstanding and why?
- How do we know?

Appropriate challenge is required between the LGC and the Head / SLT of the school. To ensure that this good practice is seen by Ofsted and in SIAMS inspections, it is crucial that key questions and challenge is clearly minuted by the Clerk to the LGC.

### **Head's Report**

The Head will provide a report to the LGC at each meeting. The Head's report for each school will vary according to the context of the school and the issues facing it at particular times. The headings marked with an asterisk (below) reflect the areas of focus for Ofsted and each of these must be covered in the Head's report with supporting data as appropriate.

## Outline:

- Pupil matters, including pupil voice
- Parent and community engagement
- Staff matters
- School activities/celebrations
- School progress
  - Outcomes for pupils\*
  - Quality of teaching and learning\*
  - Personal development, behaviour and welfare\*
  - Leadership and management\*
  - Overall effectiveness
  - Early Years Foundation Stage\*
- Vision and Values / SIAMS
- Pupil premium update
- Plans for the future
- Risk Register

In terms 2, 4 and 6 the Head will use the Trust's 'Head's report' format including performance data, which will also be sent to the Trust Board for information.

## **Code of Conduct for Governors, Trustees and Members**

Governors, Trustees and Members should conduct themselves at all times in accordance with the Trust Board's Code of Conduct (see below). Governors should be given a copy of this Handbook by the clerk to the LGC when joining as new starters and/or at the first meeting as part of the LGC and will be asked to confirm that they will comply with the Code of Conduct. The Code of Conduct is based on the National Governors Association (NGA) version with some amendments and additions. It is underpinned by the Nolan Principles of public life, established in 1995: Selflessness; Integrity; Objectivity; Accountability; Openness; Honesty and Leadership. Pickwick Academy Trust expects the highest possible standards from all of its governors, Trustees and Members. It is assumed that any governor, Trustee or Member taking on the role has agreed to adhere to the Code of Conduct.

It should be a standing item on each LGC and Trust Board agenda to declare any potential pecuniary or business interest (related to that meeting). Such interests can vary and could include close relatives where a company they are associated with might gain from a school contract. Again, Governors, Trustees and Members have a duty to comply with this.

It is the responsibility of all members and layers of our Governance community to fully support, cherish, preserve and develop the distinctive Anglican and Christian ethos of the Trust's Church Schools, ensuring that schools have distinctive Anglican and Christian values which lead to effective practice and outcomes.

Being a member of an LGC or our Trustee / Member group is an important responsibility. We understand that at times it will be challenging but ultimately, we hope that it will be rewarding.

## Pickwick Academy Trust Code of Conduct for Governors, Trustees and Members

1	No governor, Trustee or Member has individual authority or power by being a member of the Local Governance Committee (LGC) or Trust Board, unless it has specifically been delegated; only the LGC/Trust Board as a whole can take actions or decisions in accordance with the scheme of delegation, unless agreed otherwise and formally minuted.
2	No governor, Trustee or Member should use his or her position to gain advantage in other relationships with the school, Trust or community (e.g. as a teacher, employee, or parent).
3	The LGC/Trust Board recognises that it administers a public Board funded by local and national taxation. It therefore recognises the need to ensure that its proceedings are open to public scrutiny. Minutes of the most recent LGC and Trust Board meetings can be made available on request, and requests to observe meetings will be considered with regard to the importance of the accountability of the LGC/Trust Board to the local community (while recognising the need to retain confidentiality where individuals are under discussion).
4	All governors, Trustees and Members, however appointed or elected, recognise that they are individually accountable to certain bodies or constituencies. All governors, Trustees and Members, therefore, have a duty to consider the significance of LGC/Trust Board discussions and decisions during their appointment. Elected/appointed governors, Trustees and Members undertake to report to their elective bodies regularly, and to initiate methods of gathering views on matters likely to be brought before the LGC/Trust Board, where these are of a general nature or interest connected with the welfare of the academy. Appointed governors, Trustees and Members will consider ways in which the reason for their appointment may be reflected in their contributions.
5	No governor, Trustee or Member may be mandated by his or her elective or appointing board under any circumstances, although (s)he should report any views expressed by members of that board.
6	All governors, Trustees and Members are of equal standing, unless specifically delegated.

<b>7</b>	All governors, Trustees and Members are appointed, and should act, for the good of the academy, whatever their constituency.
<b>8</b>	Many governors, Trustees and Members have other relationships with the school/Trust, such as employees or parents. They should be particularly careful to ensure that these relationships are conducted in a proper and ethical manner.
<b>9</b>	Governors, Trustees and Members will attend meetings punctually and be well prepared as far as possible, having read supporting material and considered the contributions they may make on agenda items.
<b>10</b>	Governors, Trustees and Members will not use any material learned at meetings for other purposes, and no item designated as confidential will be discussed outside the LGC/Trust Board.
<b>11</b>	Governors, Trustees and Members accept corporate responsibility for the decisions of the LGC/Trust Board.
<b>12</b>	Governors, Trustees and Members will treat other governors, Trustees, Members, staff, children, parents and anyone else they may come into contact with in the course of their work with respect. There will be no behaviour in the workplace which might be seen as bullying, victimisation or harassment.
<b>13</b>	Governors, Trustees and Members will consider what individual skills, personal qualities and knowledge they possess, and put them to use for the good of the academy. They will be prepared to engage in appropriate continuing professional development throughout their period of office.

## Visiting the School

It is important that governors visit the school to familiarise themselves with its working practices and evaluate its effectiveness. It is important to remember that these visits are not part of the monitoring of teaching and learning but serve to provide governors with an overview of the context within which staff and pupils are working. There is no substitute for seeing the school in action to inform the debate in LGC meetings and governors should aim to visit the school at least three times per year to build up a picture of it as a working organisation.

Visits to the school should be pre-arranged with the Head and have a clear purpose and structure. They should include visits into classrooms to see what is happening there as well as getting to know the staff and becoming familiar with the premises. Visits for those governors with specific responsibilities, such as the SEND or Curriculum Link Governor, should focus their visit on those areas as part of the role of ensuring that the school is meeting its statutory responsibilities.

Governors should adhere to the protocol set up by Pickwick Academy Trust for such visits to ensure that everyone; governors, staff and pupils; are aware of the nature and purpose of the governor visits to the school. The protocol includes:

- an agreed list of questions which link to the work of governors, e.g. in providing resources and monitoring the School Development Plan
- the time and date of the meeting agreed beforehand with the Head
- the agenda for the visit agreed with the Head
- on the day of the visit, arrive at reception and sign in in good time to meet with the Head to make sure that the planned visit is still possible
- be careful not to interrupt the lesson but, if opportunity arises, talk to the children and praise them (never criticise) for their work
- say thank you when you leave and try to find time for a few moments with the teacher for them to chat to you about the lesson and what was achieved
- write up your notes in the agreed format, remembering that it is not the governors' role to make judgements about teaching and learning.

Visits to the school may also take other forms such as attendance at Open Evenings and Parent Consultation Days, awards ceremonies and other events. It is good practice for governors to wear badges on these occasions identifying them as governors when they talk to anyone present.

## **Governor Recruitment, Development and Training**

### **Recruitment and Induction of new Governors**

The LGC should keep the strength and skillset of governors under constant review. Governors are recruited according to their individual skills and potential to contribute to the work of the LGC of the school. Annual skills audits are expected in Pickwick Academy Trust schools. The skills audit will identify areas for future recruitment and aid succession planning. LGCs should be actively seeking potential future governors even where no current vacancy exists. With the approval of the Trust Board, identified potential new LGC members (up to 2) can be invited to participate and “learn the ropes” as Associate Members (if vacancies exist). This will provide an excellent induction to the work of the LGC and future-proof recruitment. New recruits should attend a meeting with the Chair of Governors for a full induction when they will be issued with a copy of this handbook and associated papers, and provided with key information about the membership of the LGC.

### **Filling Governor Vacancies**

Whilst Pickwick Academy Trust is responsible for setting up the initial LGC on conversion to academy status, when further vacancies occur the LGC should take the following action:

**Governor vacancy** – identify an appropriate individual locally or use School Governors One Stop Shop (SGOSS) or Wiltshire’s equivalent to source individuals. Take care in finding the right person who will commit to supporting the school, the Trust Board’s ethos and have directly relevant skills and experience. For Church Schools, consideration will need to be given to ensuring the correct proportion of foundation governors are appointed and liaison with the SDBE will be required (see below) Once an individual is agreed upon the details should be sent to the CEO for information. Details of the Foundation local governor appointment process and Diocesan Board of Education policy are available from SDBE

**Parent Governor Vacancy** – the school should use the Pickwick Academy Trust parent governor election procedures available on Governor Hub to advertise, seek nominations and hold an election process as per the procedures. Once an individual is agreed upon the details should be sent to the CEO for information.

**Staff Governor Vacancy** – the school should use the Pickwick Academy Trust staff governor election procedures available on Governor Hub if it decides to appoint a staff representative. Once an individual is agreed upon the details should be sent to the CEO for information.

### **Church School Governor appointments**

- LGCs must undertake not to appoint any person who is likely to undermine or ignore the religious character and status of a Church School
- LGCs will ensure that Foundation LGC governors take a leading role in maintaining and developing the Christian ethos of the academy
- Consideration must be given to ensuring the correct proportion of foundation governors are appointed and liaison with the SDBE will be required
  - For Church Schools which were previously Voluntary Aided (VA), a majority of governors must be foundation, and appointed by the Salisbury Diocesan Board of Education (SDBE) (staff cannot be appointed as foundation governors)
  - For Church Schools which were previously Voluntary Controlled (VC), at least 25% of governors must be foundation, and appointed with the approval of the SDBE (staff cannot be appointed as foundation governors)

### **Governor Dismissal**

Occasionally a governor may find it difficult to attend meetings or may behave in such a way that it causes difficulty for the LGC team. In the first instance the Chair should seek to address this matter directly with the individual governor. Where this does not resolve the issue the Chair should contact the CEO and Chair of the Board.

The governor will be given the opportunity to put their point of view to the CEO and Chair of the Board who will consider the matter. This may be done in writing, by phone or in person. The CEO and Chair of the Board will then make a decision on how to resolve the issue. This may include recommending to the Trust Board dismissing the governor from the LGC. The governor may appeal to the Members who will consider the factors resulting in the dismissal and either confirm the dismissal or suggest an alternative action. If the decision is dismissal the governor will then be removed from the LGC, and if Foundation, SDBE will be informed



## Appendix 1 – Glossary of Terms

The world of academy governance is full of acronyms, jargon and specialised language. To help you navigate the education vernacular, we have put together the following list of terms that you may find helpful.

<b>TERM</b>	<b>MEANING</b>
ADHD	Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder
AfL	Assessment for Learning
AGM	Annual General Meeting
AHT	Assistant Head Teacher
AP	Alternative Provision (e.g. a PRU)
APS	Average points score
ARE	Age Related Expectations
Associate Governor	Appointed by the governors, may sit on committees but is not a voting governor at the full GB meeting
AWPU	Age Weighted Pupil Unit
Benchmarking	Comparing progress made with other similar schools
CAF	Common Assessment Framework
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CFOO	Chief Finance & Operating Officer
CofE	Church of England
Co-opted	Co-opted Governor (appointed by LGB based on particular skillset)
CP	Child Protection
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CPR	Child Protection Register
DBS	Disclosure and Barring Service
DCPO	Designated Child Protection Officer
Devolved	Funds available to schools for capital items of expenditure
DfE	Department for Education (since May 2010)
DoE	Director of Education
DSG	Dedicated School Grant
EAL	English as an Additional Language
EHCP	Education, Health and Care Plans (replacing statement of SEN from September 2014)
EHT	Executive Head Teacher (responsible for more than one sch)
EWO	Educational Welfare Officer
Ex. Officio	By virtue of or because of an office
Exclusion	Fixed Term or permanent barring of a pupil from school
EYFS	Early Years Foundation Stage
FD	Finance Director
FFT	Fischer Family Trust (Data on school pupil performance)
FGB	Full Governing Board
FOI	Freedom of Information

Foundation governor	Governors appointed by the Diocese, who have a duty to preserve and develop the Christian character of a Church School
FSM	Free School Meals
FT	Full Time
FTE	Fixed Term Exclusion or Full Time Equivalent
GAG	General Annual Grant – main funding per pupil for academy
HLTA	Higher Level Teaching Assistant
HMI	Her Majesty’s Inspectorate/Inspector
HR	Human Resources
HT	Head Teacher
IEP	Individual Education Plan
INSET	In-Service Education and Training
ITT	Initial Teacher Training
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
KS1/2	Key Stage 1/2 (KS1 5-7 “Infants”, KS2 7-11 “Juniors”
LA	Local Authority
LAC	Looked After Children (also known as Cared for Children or Children in Care)
LGC	Local Governance Committee
LADO	Local Authority Designated Officer
LGPS	Local Government Pension Scheme
MAT	Multi Academy Trust
MFA	Master Funding Agreement – General agreement between EFA and Academy/Trust/MAT
MFL	Modern Foreign Language
NAHT	National Association of Head Teachers
NGA	National Governors Association
NOR	Number (of pupils) on Roll
NPQH	National Professional Qualifications for Headship
NQT	Newly Qualified Teacher
NUT	National Union of Teachers
OFSTED	Office for Standards in Education (Inspectorate)
PAN	Published Admission Number
PGCE	Post Graduate Certificate of Education
PP	Pupil Premium
PPA	Planning, Preparation and Assessment
PRP	Performance Related Pay
PRU	Pupil Referral Unit
PSHE	Personal and Social Health Education (also PSCHE including citizenship)
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
QTS	Qualified Teacher Status
Quorum	The number of Governors who need to be present if proceedings are to be valid
RAG	Red, Amber, Green rating analysis
RAISEonline/ROL	Reporting and Analysis for Improvement through School Self-Evaluation (online)
RSC	Regional Schools Commissioner (responsible for schools)

SBM	School Business Manager
SD	Schools Direct (training new teachers 'on the job')
SDBE	Salisbury Diocesan Board of Education
SDP / SDIP	School Development Plan / Sch Dev't and Improvement Plan
SEF	Self-Evaluation Form
SENCO	Special Educational Needs Coordinator
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disability
SIAMS	Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools
SIP	School Improvement Partner or School Improvement Plan
SLA	Service Level Agreement
SLT	Senior Leadership Team
SoD	Scheme of Delegation
SPAG	Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar
STPCD	School Teachers Pay and Conditions Document
TA	Teaching Assistant
TUPE	Transfer of Undertaking Protection of Employment
UPN	Unique Pupil Number
UPS	Upper Pay Spine (Teachers)
VA	Voluntary Aided (Church School)
VC	Voluntary Controlled (Church School)