Overarching Governance Procedures

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1. Audience 3
2. Purpose 3
3. Overview 3
4. Definitions 3
5. Responsibilities 4
6. Process 5
7. Legislation 10
8. Related Policies 10
9. Standards and Guidance 10
10. Supporting Information/Websites 10
11. Contacts 10

1. Audience

1.1. These procedures are written for new governors, headteachers, the local governing body chair person, and the trust's governance team.

2. Purpose

2.1. The trust has a supportive framework of governance for all our schools that includes a central infrastructure offering CPD, high-quality guidance and real-time information to governing bodies. Our school leaders must be in receipt of informed support and appropriate challenge to ensure we meet our key objectives. We see the role of governors as central to ensuring we achieve this. These procedures outline the processes that should be followed so that the governance framework (or approach) is implemented effectively.

3. Overview

3.1. These procedures cover core elements of the NPCAT governance framework including the induction process, how governors should conduct school visits and a process for virtual governance meetings.

4. Definitions

Local Governing Body (LGB)	The term "local governing body" means the local governing body (LGB) (or any other committee operating at a local level i.e. an Interim Advisory Board.
DfE	Department for Education
DBS	Disclosure and Barring Service
SEF	Self Evaluation Form
SIP	School Improvement Plan
Pecuniary Interest Form	Governors are asked to record any pecuniary interest held either personally or through a company, close relation or member of the same household. An 'interest' is a situation where a governor of a school or academy trust may be affected personally or financially, directly or indirectly, or in some way be involved in a decision made at a meeting where the governor is present.
GIAS	Get Information About Schools

5. Responsibilities

5.1. Trust Governance Team

5.1.1 The trust's governance team oversees and manages a comprehensive clerking service to Local Governing Bodies within the trust; maintaining key management systems and ensuring effective advice on governance, constitutional and procedural matters; on confirmation of appointment of a governor by the Diocese, the team will oversee the induction process and will be responsible for sending out the relevant paperwork in line with process 6.1 and the trust Code of Conduct for Governors. The trust governance team have responsibilities within the following processes:

- Governance Induction
- Virtual Meetings

5.2. School Headteacher

5.2.1 The headteacher is required to work with the LGB, and other leaders within the trust, to ensure the best education for pupils by achieving the organisation's aims and objectives. This role also requires the headteacher to develop and manage the curriculum, apply teaching and learning policies, and lead the school's SLT, as well as following, promoting and managing the academy in accordance with statutory requirements. School headteachers have responsibilities within the following procedures:

- Governance Induction
- Governor School Visits
- Virtual Meetings

5.3. The Chair

5.3.1 It is the role of the chair of the local governing body (LGB) to lead the team of ex officio and elected governors in order to effectively carry out the responsibilities set out for them by the Trust Board within the trust's Committee Terms of Reference. Chairs have responsibilities within the following processes:

- Governance Induction
- Governor School Visits
- Virtual Meetings

5.4. Foundation Governors/Parent Governors

5.4.1 Governors are people who have an interest in the role of our schools and wish to make a positive contribution to their communities. They will have enquiring minds and contribute to the effective day-to-day running of the school and the education achievements of pupils. A governing body's overriding responsibility is to work in partnership with the headteacher to promote continuous improvement in the performance of the school. This involves the establishment of a development plan, the setting of challenging but achievable targets and the interpretation of information to assess progress and determine appropriate action. Foundation

governors and parent governors have responsibilities within the following processes:

- Governance Induction
- Governor School Visits
- Virtual Meetings

6. Process

6.1. Governance Induction

6.1.1 Prospective governors must complete the DBS check and declaration as organised by the Diocese if a Foundation Governor or for a Parent Governor as organised by the Trust Business Manager.

6.1.2 When the DBS check and declaration has been completed, headteachers should invite new governors to the school for an induction, this should:

- Give a background to the school;
- Give an overview of current issues facing the school;
- Advise on procedures for visiting the school;
- Advise on the relationship between the headteacher and the LGB.

6.1.3 On appointment the trust governance team will contact governors and ask them to advise us of their preferred email address so we can get them set up with an account on GovernorHub. All LGB related documents and communications are kept in this securely encrypted database. It is recommended that governors select an email address that they access regularly so that they receive the communications to access documentation as efficiently as possible. If governors do not wish to use their personal email address, please ask the governance team to create an NPCAT email account (you will have to remember to check this regularly for updates). To advise on your email preference please contact us on: governance@npcat.org.uk.

The trust governance team will send a welcome letter and this will advise on:

- The Headteacher and Chair names
- Ask you to complete your Declarations and confirmations which are available via your profile in GovernorHub
- Advise on dates of future meetings
- Contains an attachment which advises you where you can find and read the Scheme of Delegation, governance newsletter and previous LGB minutes and documents. It will also advise you where you can book CPD.

6.1.4 As part of the induction process the LGB chair should also welcome the new governor, provide them with a verbal overview of the governor's role and link governance responsibilities, advise on how the LGB meetings are conducted, and advise on how to propose agenda items.

6.2. Link Governor School Visits

As a governor before your visit you should:

6.2.1 Review the action points in the School Improvement \ Development Plan (SIP).

6.2.2 Decide on the focus of the visit and agree this with the headteacher / link governor staff member.

6.2.3 Arrange the details of your visit including time of arrival and departure, or telephone / googlemeet visit, who you will be seeing, the purpose of your visit and what you hope to gain from the visit. Governors should aim to make at least one visit each term and at least one visit each year during school time.

6.2.4 Review your link governor toolkit to help formulate key questions to be raised / answered.

During the visit:

6.2.5 Report to the school reception to sign in / or log-on at the appropriate time.

6.2.6 Fulfil the purpose of your visit.

6.2.7 Jot down any points raised during the visit and clarification given.

6.2.8 Jot down any points for clarification to be reviewed at the next LGB / IAB meeting on the form.

6.2.9 Thank the staff and pupils you visit.

6.2.10 Discuss the points you have jotted down with the headteacher / staff member.

At or after the visit:

6.2.11 A link governor visit record and evaluation sheet should be completed and be uploaded to GovernorHub or given to / sent to the headteacher and governance team. Remember to be supportive of the headteacher and the staff. Be challenging, constructive and a critical friend. Ask questions and at all times respect the professionalism of the staff and the rights of the children. Remember that you are representing the LGB and that you are a guest of the school.

6.2.12 The evaluation sheet will be stored in the school GovernorHub documents area.

6.2.13 Prepare to report on your visit at the next LGB meeting.

6.3. Virtual Meetings

6.3.1 Virtual meetings occur in the event that face-to-face meetings are not possible.

When a virtual meeting does occur, the clerk should:

6.3.2 Ensure that the protocol for conducting virtual meetings is agreed upon by all members of the board prior to the meeting taking place.

6.3.3 Notify members in advance that the meeting will be conducted virtually.

6.3.4 Record, within the written minutes of the meeting, the details of the virtual meeting, in the same way as a face to face meeting.

6.3.5 Ensure that recordings of any meetings are properly dealt with in line with the Trust's GDPR Policy and Procedures.

The chair should:

6.3.6 Ensure that all members of the meeting are aware of the processes outlined in this document.

6.3.7 Consider any objections to meetings taking place virtually.

6.3.8 Decide whether a recording is appropriate during the virtual meeting, and notify members that a recording is taking place, prior to the meeting.

Members of the governance meeting will:

6.3.9 Be aware of, and act in accordance with, the processes outlined in this document.

6.3.10 Act in accordance with the Governance Code of Conduct.

6.3.11 Not take covert recordings of meetings.

6.3.12 Notify the chair of any objections they may have to a recording being made.

6.3.13 Be respectful of the rights of individuals who do not wish to be recorded.

6.3.14 In the absence of either the chair or the clerk, their responsibilities, as outlined in this process.

Conducting remote meetings:

6.3.15 Any director or local governor will be able to participate in meetings by telephone or video conference provided that:

- They have given notice of their intention to do so at least 48 hours before the scheduled meeting.

- They have detailed the telephone number they will be contactable on and / or appropriate details of the video conference suite from which they will be taking part at the time of the meeting, at least 48 hours prior to the meeting.
- They have access to the appropriate equipment.

6.3.16 If a remote attendee is not available for any reason, the meeting will go ahead without the participation of the remote attendee, so long as the meeting is otherwise quorate.

6.3.17 The attendance of remote attendees will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting and on the published meeting attendance record.

6.3.18 Minutes of any meetings will be recorded in line with the Trust process.

6.3.19 Minutes will be agreed by all attendees and signed by the chair at the next meeting or via the facility in GovernorHub. If the next meeting is held remotely, the minutes will be agreed at that meeting and signed by the chair outside of the meeting or by the facility in GovernorHub.

Remote meeting processes:

6.3.20 Meetings of directors/local governors will be convened by the clerk.

6.3.21 Each director/local governor will be given at least seven days' notice.

They will receive:

Notice via GovernorHub or email, by the clerk and sent to each director/local governor.

A copy of the agenda for the meeting.

6.3.22 If there are matters which require urgent consideration, it will be sufficient if the notice of the meeting and the copy of the agenda are given within shorter notice periods.

6.3.24 The meeting will be clerked in the same way as any other governance meeting. If the clerk is unavailable, normal procedures in accordance with the Trust scheme of delegation will be followed to ensure their duties are fulfilled in their absence.

6.3.25 Any existing conflict of interest pertaining to the agenda will be declared at the start of the meeting. If a conflict of interest prevents an attendee from participating in any part of the meeting, the clerk will ensure the attendee ceases participation from the call/conference until the members have finished discussing/voting.

6.3.26 Minutes of any meetings will be recorded in line with the Trust process.

6.3.27 Minutes will be agreed by all attendees and signed by the chair at

the next meeting. If the next meeting is held remotely, the minutes will be agreed at that meeting and signed by the chair outside of the meeting.

Confidentiality, security and data protection

6.3.28 Full consideration will be given to the privacy and security features of the chosen remote meeting platform and software will not be used if the security provision is insufficient.

6.3.29 The meeting shall not be recorded on any digital device or programme used by the clerk, any director / local governor unless:

The intention to record the meeting is made clear to all attendees prior to the recording being made, with the opportunity to express any Objections.

All attendees provide consent to the recording taking place.
It is agreed that recording the meeting will assist with the accuracy of creating a written record of the meeting.

6.3.30 If attendees agree to the recording of the meeting, the following must apply:

- At the meeting, before recording is commenced, the chair will notify all
- attendees that recording will take place.
- Attendees who are not present at the start of the meeting will be notified
- upon their arrival a recording is being made.

6.3.31 Within the minutes of a meeting, details of the following will be noted:

- Any objections to the meeting being recorded.
- The chair's consideration and final decision regarding the commencement of recording.
- Whether attendees other than the clerk are permitted to make recordings is at the discretion of the board. When this decision is being made, the purpose of the recording will be taken into account.

6.3.32 All actions taken by the board, including the creation, storage, retention and disposal of recordings, will be in line with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 2018, GDPR and Freedom of Information Act 2000, where relevant.

6.3.33 Where a confidential item is on the agenda, attendees will be informed of this at the beginning of the meeting, prior to the commencement of recording. Confidential items will only be included within a recording of a meeting if the purpose and intention of the recording of the item is clear and justifiable.

7. Legislation

This policy has due regard to legislation including, but not limited to:

Data Protection Act 2018
Freedom of Information Act 2000
The School Governance (Roles, Procedures and Allowances) (England) Regulations 2013
The Education Act 2011 part 5

8. Related Policies

- Scheme of Delegation
- Articles of Association
- Governor Code of Conduct
- GDPR Policy

9. Standards and Guidance

These procedures pay due regard to the following guidance documents:

- Academy Trust Governance Guide
- Academies Trust Handbook
- DfE (2025) 'Keeping children safe in education'

10. Supporting Information/Websites

Academy Trust Governance Guide

Scheme of Delegation

NPCAT Link Governance Framework and Toolkit

11. Contacts

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NEW GOVERNOR CHECKLIST

(Governor please sign once actioned)

Welcome to the LGB by the Chair	
Invited by the Headteacher to visit the school	
Toured the school and met staff and children	
Received an informal briefing on the School from the Headteacher	
Met informally with an existing governor (mentor)	
Formally introduced to members of the LGB.	
Reviewed first meeting with mentor.	
Have you received? Copy of appointment letter (From Diocese if a foundation governor)	

Governors should find and read the following documents / information on the school website / GovernorHub.

Academy Trust Governance Guide	
Induction procedure for new governors (including checklist)	
The Trusts "Code of Conduct for Local Governing Bodies"	

Governor training and professional development	
Copy of Scheme of Delegation	
Copy of Articles of Association	
Dates of future LGB meetings	
Details of how to contact other governors	
Details of how to contact the school (including email addresses)	
Calendar of school events	
School / Governance newsletters	
School Improvement Plan (SIP) /SEF	
Latest Ofsted report	
Policy documents (statutory and other)	
Pupil premium strategy and analysis	
Sports funding strategy (primary).	
Link Governance Framework and Link Governor Visit Checklist, Evaluation and Report Form.	
Keeping Children Safe in Education.	
Copy of minutes from previous meetings.	

Has the Headteacher covered?

Background to the school.	
Current issues facing the school.	
Protocols for visits to the school.	
Overview of the governor's role.	
Relationship between the Head Teacher and LGB.	

Name (print)

Signed:

Date:

Please retain original signed for your own records, forward a copy to the chair of governors and with a copy also provided to the clerk of the LGB to be retained by the Trust's Corporate Services Team.