The Diocese of Gloucester Academies Trust

Clerks' Forum

20 October 2020

THE DIOCESE OF GLOUCESTER ACADEMIES TRUST
unlocking potential

Welcome and Introductions

Ellie Hully
Company Secretary and Clerk to DGAT

Nicki Wadley

DGAT Governance Lead

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"Good Clerking is a major contributing factor to effective governance and therefore school improvement"

Information for School and College Governors

A good Clerk is an invaluable
resource for Governors!

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Check-in

How are you?

Any Questions

or areas needing support

Update from DfE
(including COVID-19)

DfE Governance updates

Updates include:

Governance handbook
Academy trusts and maintained schools

October 2020

Updated 8th October 2020
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/governance-handbook

- The importance of Board's reflecting the diversity of the Trust/school communities they serve.

- Further recognition of the importance of high-quality clerking, including the need for Clerk's to be appropriately skilled and knowledgeable.

- Safeguarding compliance updates to reflect the updated version of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

- Updates to reflect the most up-to-date version of the Academies Financial Handbook and Ofsted Education Inspection Framework.

DfE Governance updates – October 2020
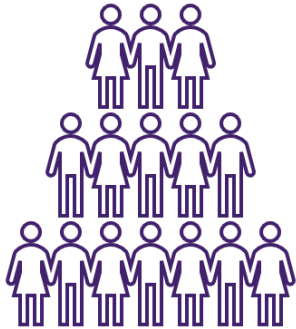
Governance Structures and Roles

An explanation of how governing boards of maintained schools and academy trusts are structured.

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/governance-structures-and-roles

Governing board meetings and visits in the Autumn term and beyond

Academy trusts: governance
Links to relevant guidance and resources for academy trust governors.

https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/academy-trusts-governance

Update from Chairs' Forum (including Scheme of Delegation)

Feedback from Clerks

§ Annual Schedule of Work 2020-21

§ Induction Pack for New Governors

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15-minute
Comfort Break

Year-end Compliance

Academies Financial Handbook 2020

- The trust must be **transparent with its governance arrangements.**

- Including what the board has delegated to **local governing bodies**.

The Trust must also **publish on its website**:

- The **structure and remit** of the trust's **local governing bodies** and the **full names of the chair of each**

- For each **local governor** serving at any point over the **past 12 months,** their full names, date of appointment, term of office, date they stepped down (where applicable), who appointed them, and relevant business and pecuniary interests including governance roles in other educational institutions.

- For each **local governor**, their **attendance records at local governing body meetings over the last academic year**.

Compliance Checklist

Statutory Requirements

The statutory responsibilities for Local Governing Bodies are set out in the Scheme of Delegation, Academies Financial Handbook and Governance Handbook.

Local Governance Compliance Checklist

Local Governors	Statutory	Recommended	In-Place	Notes
School email address	*			
Information on GIAS	*			
Information on school website	*			
Local Governance Books				
Scheme of Delegation	*			
Register of Governors	*			
Summary of Governor Roles and Responsibilities	*			
Register of Interests[note 1]	*			
Declaration of Criminal Record and other relevant information	*			
Attendance at meetings in last 12 months	*			
Governors Code of Conduct – signed annually by all Governors	*			
Governance Structure inc. committees		*		

Year-End Checklist

Clerk to Governors' Year-End Checklist

Suggested Summer jobs to prepare for the Autumn term

Task	Complete
▪ Ensure Governors' contact details and home addresses are up to date (and that this is reflected in the Single Central Record)	
▪ Check for any terms of office due to come to an end in the next academic year	
▪ Check if any DBS checks need updating	
▪ Ask Governors to check, update and sign a Register of Business Interests form	
▪ Calculate and summarise meeting attendance for the academic year	
▪ Ensure website is up to date with Governor information and statutory requirements, including any policies which must be published	
▪ Prepare business plan for the next academic year (see DGAT's Annual Schedule of Work)	
▪ Update yourself with updates to key statutory documents (such as the Governance Handbook or Academies Financial Handbook)	
▪ Update all statutory books/files for the year including: o Register of Business Interests o Agendas and signed minutes o Any updates to your Scheme of Delegation o An updated register of Governors	
▪ Propose the Boards nomination for Chair to DGAT	
At the first meeting of new academic year:	**Complete**

GIAS Checklist

- [Get Information About Schools](#)
  (aka GIAS)

Election of LGB Chair and Vice Chair

- **For 2020-21:** Send LGB Chair nomination to DGAT **after 1st LGB meeting** of the 2020-21 academic year

- **For 2021-22:** Send LGB Chair nomination to DGAT **before 1 July 2021** for nominations to go to last DGAT Board meeting of the year ready for the 2021-22 academic year

Clerks' Area on DGAT Website

Live walkaround

- [DGAT's Member's Area](#)
- Updated Clerks' Handbook
  - Feedback from Clerks

15-minute
Comfort Break

Training:

Policy Management

Purpose of this Training

To understand:

- Accountability and responsibility for policies
  - The policy review process
  - Communication of policy compliance
  - Local context considerations
  - How policy implementation can be monitored
  - Ways the Clerk can support LGB

+ FAQs and Quiz

Statutory requirements

- [Governance Handbook (2020)](#)

- [Statutory Policies for Schools and Academy Trusts](#)

  - Scheme of Delegation

Statutory Policies for Academies

- Admissions arrangements
- Charging and remissions
- Data protection
- Protection of biometric information of children in schools and colleges
- Complaints
- Capability of staff
- Newly Qualified Teachers **– awaiting Trust board approval**
- Staff discipline, conduct and grievance (procedures for addressing)
- Child protection policy and procedures – inc a statement of procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against staff
- Children with health needs who cannot attend school
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions - **– awaiting Trust board approval**
- Health and safety
- First aid in schools
- Whistleblowing (procedures)
- Relationships Education and RSE

- Designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children
- Special educational needs and disability
- Behaviour in schools
- School exclusion
- Early Years Foundation Stage

Additional DGAT policies

- Staff and Volunteer Acceptable Use Policy
- Dignity at Work Policy
- Probationary Period Policy
- Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Policy
- Anti-Bribery and Corruption Policy
- Recruitment and Selection Policy
- Religious Education – DBE issued
- Reference Policy
- Sickness Policy
- Retirement Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Lettings Policy
- Pay Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy

- Job Sharing Policy
- Performance Management Policy and Procedure
- Freedom of Information Policy
- Intimate Care Policy
- Redundancy Policy
- Agency Workers Policy
- Charge Card Policy
- Estates Management Funding Policy
- Staff Attendance Policy
- Staff Wellbeing Policy
- Policy on Managing Abusive, Aggressive or Violent Visitors
- Risk Assessment Policy
- Annual Leave Policy
- Authorised Special Leave Policy
- **Governors' Code of Conduct**
- **Governor and Trustee Expenses Policy**
- Conflict of Interest Policy
- Right to Request Flexible Working Policy
- **Financial Procedures Policy**

Policies which MUST be published on the academy website

Statutory requirement

- Admissions arrangements
- Behaviour Policy
- Equality objectives
- Complaints Policy
- Charging and Remissions Policy

DGAT requirement

- Child Protection and Safeguarding and Covid-19 appendix
- Data Protection
- Remote Learning Policy
- Behaviour Policy Covid-19 appendix

Accountability and Responsibility

- DGAT Trust Board have **ultimate responsibility for policy management and compliance** across the Trust

- DfE **statutory** policies and guidance documents

- Scrutiny, local adaptation and delivery delegated to LGBs through **Scheme of Delegation**

- SoD specify the role and responsibilities of LGBs and schools

The responsibilities of the LGB as set out in the DGAT Scheme of Delegation

- **To monitor the implementation of all Trust-wide policies** and additional policies as set out in the annual policy review schedule

- To provide the Trust, when requested, **copies of any policies and procedures and a schedule for their review**, as requested by the Directors

- To ensure that **any requested policy addendums are implemented** in the event of extra-ordinary events or circumstances

- To consult before setting an **Admissions Policy**

The responsibilities of the **LGB** as set out in the **DGAT** Scheme of Delegation

- To **implement the Performance Management Policy** (in collaboration with the central team and Headteacher)

- To **implement and monitor a RSHE Policy**, having due regard for Church of England guidance

- To **implement and monitor a Behaviour Policy**

- To **monitor the implementation of the Trust Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**

Policy Review

- **Focused approach** to policy management
- Ensure **robust process** in place in terms of **policy review and notification of updates** to schools
- **Review** of statutory (and some other) policies and guidance **delegated** by the Trust Board to the **Central Office Team** (namely Nicki Wadley)

Policy Review

When reviewing a policy, the Trust must ensure it:

- Meets **statutory requirements** and includes up-to-date information
- Is **fit for purpose**
- Clearly **outlines responsibilities** of key staff
- Is **implemented** in practice
- Confirms a **review date**
- Is written so it can be **understood** and is **accessible** to its intended audience

Communicating Policy Compliance

- Imperative that communication is **effective, open and transparent** at all levels

- Ensure any requirements are **understand** and **actioned**

DGAT commit to:

- Ensuring **current** policies and guidance available on **website**

- Any **updates communicated** through newsletter and Forums

Local Context and Considerations

- Some policies or guidance require **local context**
  - For example, the Trust-wide Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy amended to reflect issues pertinent to the local area and risks

Monitoring the implementation of policies

To ensure policy implementation LGB should look to draw conclusions from:

- Any relevant governor **monitoring visits**
    - Any **reports** presented

- Are measures put in place **effective**?
- Do reports highlight any **areas of concern**?
- Do reports request any **amendments** to the current policy?

Monitoring the implementation of policies

- Local Governors must dedicate appropriate **time to reading and reviewing** policies
  - Review schedules in line with **academic calendar**, **statutory** requirements or **DfE guidance**
- LGBs responsibility to ensure all correct policies are uploaded onto the **school website**

Ways the Clerk can support LGB

- Knowledge of **what policies are required** and **where to find them** on DGAT website
- Knowledge of and referral to the **SoD** when necessary
- Keep **up to date** with and **communicate** policy or guidance updates from DGAT to the LGB
- Remind LGB to review **local context considerations**

Ways the Clerk can support LGB

- Ensure Governors have enough **time to read and review papers** before a meeting
  - To work in conjunction with the SLT to ensure a **clear policy summary is in place** and polices are uploaded onto the **school website** as required
    - **Share feedback** with DGAT central team

Summary

To ensure policy compliance and that policy implementation has a **positive impact** within academies it is important that:

- DGAT are **clear on the policies that are required**

- **Delegated roles and responsibilities are communicated and understood** through the SoD

- **Updates or changes to policies are clearly communicated** in a timely manner

- Policy **implementation is understood and monitored** by LGBs

DGAT Policy Management Flow Chart

DGAT Policy Management Flow Chart October 2020

Is this a statutory policy?

Y → Has DGAT provided Trust wide version of this policy? (Check latest list of current DGAT policies and updates in monthly newsletter)

N → Has DGAT provided Trust wide version of this policy? (Check latest list of current DGAT policies and updates in monthly newsletter)

Does the school another relevant policy in place

Could these policies be amended to include proposed new objective?

Is the policy on the DGAT website?

Is the policy on the DGAT website?

Use DGAT's policy
- Amend to individual school context as relevant (e.g. named H&S Lead etc.)
- Take to next LGB or relevant committee meeting to be ratified
- Publish on school website if required

Contact NW at DGAT

Amalgamate policies
- Amend to individual school context as relevant (e.g. named H&S Lead etc.)
- Take to next LGB or relevant committee meeting to be ratified
- Publish on school website if required

Will the policy improve safety or have a positive impact on pupils, staff and other stakeholders?

Is there another way you could achieve your objective?

Get rid of or don't create a new policy
- Make the decision to remove or not create a new policy
- Ensure all stakeholders are informed

Keep or create a new policy

If decision is made to create a new policy:
- Check for model policy on TheSchoolBus
- Contact NW at DGAT if support required

Use DGAT's policy
- Amend to individual school context as relevant (e.g. named H&S Lead etc.)
- Take to next LGB or relevant committee meeting to be ratified
- Publish on school website if required

Policy FAQs

Practical Exercise - Quiz

Who is ultimately responsible for policy management and compliance?

a) The LGB

b) The Headteacher

c) DGAT

?

How is responsibility delegated to LGBs?

a) By word of mouth

b) Through the Scheme of Delegation

c) Via the DGAT website

?

Individual schools can choose whether to have statutory policies in place.

True or false?

?

Who is responsible for tracking which statutory policies are due for review?

a) DGAT Central Team

b) The Clerk

c) Local Governors

?

Where can the most up to date policies and guidance be found?

a)   By asking Nicki

b)   In the Members' Area of the DGAT website

c)   Via Google

?

Policies provided by DGAT must NEVER be changed.

True or false?

?

Name two ways in which policy implementation can be monitored by the LGB.

?

Do DGAT Clerks have any input into the policy review process?

a) Absolutely none

b) They are responsible for all policies in their school

c) Clerks play an active role in supporting the LGB with policy management

?

AOB

Clerks' Forum: Dates for 2020-21

9 February 2021

22 June 2021

Time / venue

What would YOU like covered?

Chairs' Forum Update

Useful Websites

DGAT's Member's Area

DGAT's Key Information Pages

Gov.uk – School Governance Update

Statutory Policies for Schools and Academy Trusts

Academies Financial Handbook

The Governance Handbook

Competency Framework for Governance

TheSchoolBus

GCC Clerks Corner

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Thank you!

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