



## What does a Lionheart Local Governing Body governor do?

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Governance involves several activities, each of which contribute to the core function of holding the school to account for outcomes for children and young people, and for ensuring that the vision and ethos of the Trust is effectively implemented appropriately within the local school context and community.

### The tasks of governors include:

- Attending approximately 4 meetings per year - reading papers in advance, engaging in discussions within the meeting, following up on any actions agreed
- Visiting the school to see the educational offer first hand or to join sessions run for parents where they learn how to support their child with learning
- Listening to the stakeholder voice – attending a School Council meeting / discussing the findings of questionnaires in governors’ meetings / joining parents’ evenings to engage with parents about their experience of the school
- Being an ambassador for the school within the parent, business and local communities – building network links to support the school
- Taking on a particular area of focus such as outcomes for special needs pupils, or monitoring safeguarding
- Undergoing training in order to be able to effectively perform the role. All governors are expected to undergo induction and safeguarding training within the first 6 months of appointment, and to pro actively seek out additional training to suit the roles they agree to take on within the team
- Uploading information and accessing some documents through our online portal, Governorhub, and receiving and returning paperwork electronically (packs of documents for meetings are provided in paper form)

### The core role of Local Governing Body governance:

- Holding senior leaders to account for the academic outcomes for pupils
- Understanding the outcomes for vulnerable groups and challenging senior leaders to ensure that underperforming groups are effectively supported
- Holding leaders to account for the holistic development of young people – their enrichment experiences, pastoral care, safeguarding and the development of their wellbeing
- Ensuring that parents, staff and pupils have a voice and that their opinions are considered when making decisions
- Engaging with the local community – supporting the school in making positive community and business links to benefit the pupils
- Visiting the school during the working day and/or for parents’ evenings, concerts, celebrations etc. to see first hand that the information shared in meetings is a true reflection of the school
- Receiving reports from external bodies such as Ofsted, external reviewers and the Trust, to ensure that the information shared in meetings is a true reflection of the school

The role of governor is largely a thinking and questioning role, not a doing role.

A governor does not

- Write school policies – though governors may develop policies alongside staff
- Undertake audits of any sort – whether financial or health & safety - even if the governor has the relevant professional experience – though governors may work with a member of staff who is conducting an audit
- Spend a significant amount of time with the pupils of the school – if you want to work directly with children, there are many other voluntary valuable roles within the school
- Fundraise – this is the role of the PTA – the governing body should consider income streams and the potential for income generation, but not carry out fundraising tasks
- Undertake classroom observations to make judgements on the quality of teaching – the governing body monitors the quality of teaching in the school by requiring data from the senior staff and from external sources
- Do the job of the school staff – if there is not enough capacity within the paid staff team to carry out the necessary tasks, the governing body need to consider and rectify this
- Use their governance role as a way of gaining favour for their own child within the school. Governors focus on the needs of all, and sometimes have to make decisions in the best interests of the school which may disadvantage their own child's class in some way

### The possibility of taking some time off work to fulfil the role

Under Section 50 of the *Employment Rights Act 1996*, if you are employed, then you are entitled to 'reasonable time off' to undertake public duties; this includes school governance. 'Reasonable time off' is not defined in law, and you will need to negotiate with your employer how much time you will be allowed.

### Expenses

There is a Governor Expenses Policy which outlines the process for claiming expenses. In general terms, governors are expected to pay for their own travel to and from school for meetings but can claim for travel to training etc. at a greater distance. If childcare is needed, governors are expected to check first with the school whether any pre or after school care is available to coincide with meeting times, where appropriate. Unavoidable childcare costs can be claimed at cost.

In order to perform this role well, a governor is expected to abide by the Trust Code of Conduct.

## Hub Governance

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Increasingly as a Trust we are working to develop best practice and economies of scale across our family of schools, and are establishing Hub Governance, which goes alongside Local Governing Body governance in individual schools. Hub Governing Bodies also meet approximately 4 times each year.

Whilst the Local Governing Body has a focus on issues specific to the individual school, the Hub focuses on the more operational areas of finance, HR, premises, business risk, marketing etc. across two or more schools. Hub Governors are appointed by the Trust Board based on specific skills, and most are using these skills on a daily basis within their working lives as accountants, HR managers, etc.

Anyone interested in offering to support our schools by becoming a Hub Governor should contact the Chair of the Board on [chairofgovernors@lionhearttrust.org.uk](mailto:chairofgovernors@lionhearttrust.org.uk). We would be delighted to talk this through with you.



*Good governance makes a significant difference to an academy and Lionheart Trust is very grateful for the many hours spent by governors in carrying out their role in partnership with the Trust to ensure the very best outcomes for children and young people.*

*For governance to be effective there are some basic principles we all need to abide by so that meetings can run smoothly, the burden of work is shared, and governors are reflective on their own performance and capacity and accept the need to step down if these dip in any way.*

## Code of Conduct for Governors

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It is important that confidence in the good governance and probity of academies generally and this academy (the **academy**) in particular is maintained. In order to assist the Local Governing Body (the **LGB**) achieve this, Lionheart Academies Trust has adopted this code of conduct for governors (the **code**).

**The academy** will establish a LGB that is competent, accountable, independent and diverse that promotes best practice in governance

*The academy shall use the Governance Handbook and the Governor Competency Framework as a guide to help the LGB achieve good governance but also as a tool to regularly assess the strengths and weaknesses of the academy's governance practice and improve it*

**The LGB** will ensure that its governors promote and uphold high standards of conduct, probity and ethics

*Each governor shall uphold the seven principles of public life identified by the Nolan Committee on Standards in public life (May 1996) and work effectively with national standards outlined in the Governance Handbook and the Governance Competency Framework.*

**The Trust** requires its governors to act in accordance with the Trust's Articles of Association (the **Articles**), Scheme of Delegation and this Code of Conduct

*Each governor will uphold the ethos and vision of the Trust and will work within the Trust framework.*

### **Application of the Code**

This code applies to all Lionheart governors when exercising any of the LGB's powers delegated to them through the Scheme of Delegation. By accepting appointment to the LGB, each governor agrees to accept the provisions of this Code.

### **The good governance standard for public services**

The standard prepared by The Independent Commission on Good Governance in Public Services in 2005 comprises six core principles of good governance, each with its supporting principles. Set out below is an extract of these core principles.

<p>Good governance means focusing on the organisation’s purpose and on outcomes for pupils, parents and the wider community</p>	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• abide by the vision and ethos of Lionheart Academies Trust – that any young person from any background deserves an equal chance to be successful in whatever they choose to do. The trust is committed to supporting young people to open doors to their futures and to feel confident that they can thrive in a competitive world.</li> <li>• keep pupils at the heart of all decision making</li> <li>• ensure that pupils receive a high quality education</li> <li>• ensure that taxpayers receive value for money</li> </ul>
<p>Good governance means performing effectively in clearly defined functions and roles</p>	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• be clear about the functions of the LGB as outlined in the Governance Handbook and Competency Framework</li> <li>• be clear about the LGB’s role in relation to the powers delegated by Lionheart Academies Trust through the Scheme of Delegation and ensure that those responsibilities are carried out</li> <li>• ensure that governors do not overstep the boundaries of the role</li> <li>• ensure that when governors are engaging with the school as a parent or in another capacity, they do not exert undue influence based on their additional role as a governor</li> </ul>
<p>Good governance means promoting values for the whole organisation and demonstrating the values of good governance through behaviour</p>	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• put organisational values into practice</li> <li>• behave in ways that uphold and exemplify effective governance</li> <li>• be champions of the school to parents, pupils and the wider community</li> <li>• ensure that all communication in a private capacity (including social media) supports and affirms the value of the academy</li> </ul>
<p>Good governance means taking informed, transparent decisions and managing risk</p>	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• be rigorous and transparent about how decisions are taken</li> <li>• have and use good quality information, advice and support, being pro active in asking for training or changes to layout etc. where information is difficult to access</li> <li>• ensure that risk management is taken into account in decision making</li> <li>• ensure that the prioritising of safeguarding underpins all decision-making</li> </ul>

<p>Good governance means developing the capacity and capability of the governing body to be effective</p>	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ensure that appointed and elected governors have the skills, knowledge and experience they need to perform well</li> <li>• develop the capability of people with governance responsibilities and evaluate their performance, as individuals and as a group</li> <li>• strike a balance, in the membership of the governing body, between continuity and renewal</li> <li>• be mindful of the expectations on the role as outlined in the Governor Competency Framework</li> <li>• pro actively seek out training to support skills development</li> <li>• be self-reflective, ensuring that if capacity changes or the expectations of the role are not achievable, governors will pro actively step down from the role</li> </ul>
<p>Good governance means engaging stakeholders and making accountability real</p>	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• understand formal and informal accountability relationships</li> <li>• take an active and planned approach to dialogue with and accountability to stakeholders</li> </ul>

## Nolan principles

The LGB expects each governor to uphold the following principles based on the Nolan Committee’s work:

- **selflessness** - take decisions solely based on the vision and values of the academy and Lionheart Academies Trust
- **integrity** – not be compromised in carrying duties by outside organisations or personal interest
- **objectivity** – remain impartial and ensure choices are made on merit alone
- **accountability** – be responsible for decisions and actions
- **openness** – give reasons for actions wherever possible and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands
- **honesty** – declare any private interests and take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest
- **leadership** – promote these principles by example

Additionally, the LGB expects governors to promote equality and diversity in all aspects of the academy’s governance and when carrying out any of their functions.

## What does this look like in practice – minimum expectations

### Meetings:

- Attending the 5 or 6 meetings in the year.
- Reading all paperwork in advance of the meeting.
- Engaging fully with the meeting.
- When accessing documents electronically within meetings, not using the electronic device to do other work, use the internet etc.
- Taking responsibility for acting on any follow up actions agreed at the meeting, including the completion of forms and updating Governorhub as required.

*If a governor is unable to attend a meeting, they are expected to contact the Clerk in advance to send their apologies and the reason for their non-attendance so that the LGB can decide whether or not to minute that they accept the apologies.*

*If a governor fails to send apologies in advance, the Clerk will contact the governor to ask for a reason for non-attendance and to discuss capacity.*

*If a governor does not attend 2 meetings in a row, the Chair will contact them to have a discussion about capacity.*

***If a governor misses a meeting, there is an expectation that they will add capacity in some other way e.g. joining a panel, attending a concert and writing a report, attending training and reporting back, taking part in a learning walk linked to the School Development Plan as agreed with the Chair.***

### Visits / first hand knowledge:

Carrying out at least one visit per year linked to an area of the School Development Plan

*This can take place outside the school day, e.g. visiting a middle leader to discuss their area of work, as agreed by the LGB and linked to the School Development Plan.*

### Additional responsibilities

One additional responsibility each year such as being part of a pay committee meeting, or a panel, or attending (and doing a written report on) a celebration event in the school, such as the school play

### Being self reflective

Each governor needs to take responsibility for reflecting on their own capacity and contribution to the role. Each year we will use a self-reflection tool which governors need to complete and return, using this to support on-going self-reflection.

The LGB has a responsibility to ensure that governance is effective and efficient. If capacity or performance are seen to dip, the Chair of Governors or Chair of the Trust will speak to the governor (or nominate someone to speak on their behalf) to discuss their concerns, and may possibly ask the governor to step down.

If, after taking advice from the LGB, the Trust feels that a governor is no longer fulfilling the responsibilities of the role they may remove them from the LGB.

### Business Interests

- declare all interests they have as required by the articles and the general law

- comply with any rules requiring withdrawal from a meeting where this is required because of an interest

### Confidentiality and Collective decision-making

- respect the confidentiality of information that they may have access to as a governor of the academy and keep confidential the affairs of the LGB, including the outcomes of governing body votes.
- express their views openly within meetings but accept collective responsibility for all decisions
- only speak or act on behalf of the governing body when they have been specifically asked to do so

### Keeping records

- accept that in the interests of open governance, our full names, date of appointment, terms of office, roles on the governing board, attendance records, relevant business and pecuniary interests, category of governor and the body responsible for appointing us will be published on the school's website and data will be added to the DfE's database of governors, which is openly available online.
- inform the clerk to the LGB as soon as possible should any changes to their circumstances occur during their term as a governor, including if:
  - there are any changes to the interests which have been declared
  - they become, or cease to be, a company director, board member or trustee of another company or charity
  - their occupation changes
  - they move house
  - they become employed by the academy
  - their connection with the council (if any) changes

### Visiting the academy

- pre-arrange visits to the academy and sign in and out at reception
- listen attentively and without prejudice to the opinions of senior leaders, recognising and valuing their wisdom, skills and insights

### Training

- new governors agree to attend, as a minimum, GDS Induction training, safeguarding training (through GDS or in school alongside staff), data training within their school – within their first 6 months
- all governors to be pro active in seeking out training on an on-going basis which will enable them to add capacity and bring skills to the team
- Finance Governors agree to attend an in-house finance session with the bursar within the first 3 months of taking on the role
- SEND Governors agree to attend SEND briefings
- Safeguarding Governor to attend GDS Safeguarding training within 6 months of taking on the role
- Pupil Premium Governors to attend GDS Pupil Premium training within 6 months of taking on the role

- Chairs of governors agree to attend GDS chairs' training sessions and Chairs' briefings as a minimum
- Chairs of hubs agree to complete the national Governors' Leadership Development Programme and attend GDS Chairs' briefings

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### **Breaches of the code**

Every governor is under a duty to report any breach of this Code or any grounds for believing that a breach of the code has occurred to the Chair (and if the allegation is about the chair, to the vice-chair).

Failing to report a breach of the code is itself a breach of this code.

Any breach of this Code will be treated extremely seriously by the LGB, the academy and Lionheart Academies Trust and may result in suspension or removal from the LGB.

In the event of a breach of this Code each governor agrees to participate fully in any investigations procedure instigated by the LGB or the Trust and to abide by any sanction that may be imposed on them by the LGB or the trust for such breach.

### **Review**

The Lionheart Board will be responsible for ensuring that this Code of Conduct is kept under review. Any changes should be disseminated to the Governing Body by the Chair of Governors.