



GOVERNANCE HANDBOOK

2026-2027



Girls' Learning Trust

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1. STRUCTURE OF THE TRUST

Members

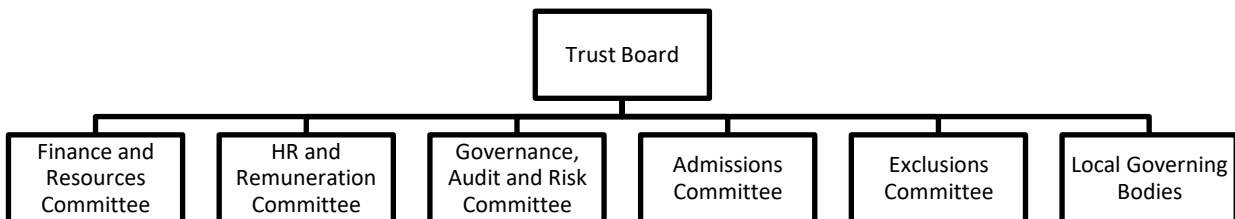
- The minimum number of members must not be less than three.
- Employees of the Trust cannot be Members.

Trustees

- The number of Trustees must not be less than three, but is not subject to a maximum.
- The Members can appoint up to nine Trustees including the Chief Executive Officer.
- Additional Trustees can be co-opted onto the Board in addition to the nine appointed by the Members.
- If there are not two parent governors on each LGB (as stated below) there must be at least two parent Trustees.
- Trustees must hold at least four meetings a year. The quorum is any three Trustees for general business, or where greater, any one third (rounded up to a whole number) of the total number of members of the Board.
- Trustees must appoint a Chair and Vice Chair of each LGB annually, for a one-year term.
- Trustees must appoint a Chair of the other Trust Committees for a one-year term.
- Trustees must appoint the Clerk to the Trust Board, Trust Committees and the Company Secretary.
- Trustees must appoint Trustees and appointed governors to the Trust committees (including LGBs) and ratifies the appointment of any staff or parent governors following an election.
- Trustees should delegate responsibilities to the Trust Committees in written terms of reference that are reviewed annually by Trust Board and included later in this handbook.
- If not appointed as a Trustee, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) will be required to be “in attendance” at all Trust Board meetings, with senior Trust staff and Headteachers as required.
- The Term of office for a Trustee is four years (Trustees may be reappointed if eligible). It is the Board’s preference that no Trustee should serve more than a combined total of ten years as a Trustee and/or a LGB Governor.

Trust Subcommittees (including LGBs)

- The current subcommittees of Trust Board are shown in the diagram below. The Trust can also set up other subcommittees and task and finish groups to address specific projects as required.



- The Chair, delegated powers, membership and proceedings of the Trust subcommittees (including Local Governing Bodies) are determined by Trustees and reviewed annually via the terms of reference in the handbook.
- All Trust subcommittees (except LGBs) must have a majority of Trustees in their membership.

- All Trust subcommittees (except LGBs) must appoint their Vice Chair for a one-year term (which may be renewed).

Local Governing Bodies

- Each LGB is chaired by a Trustee.
- Each LGB should have at least two parent governors.
- Parent governors cannot seek re-election if they no longer have a child at the school.
- A parent governor whose child has left school may be recruited as an Appointed Governor should a vacancy arise.
- The term of office for a LGB governor is four years. Governors may be reappointed if eligible.
- The CEO is 'in attendance' at all LGB meetings alongside senior Trust staff as required.

2. SUMMARY RESPONSIBILITIES AND REPORTING

The Trust Board:

- Is the overall governing body of the Trust (and all the schools within it). It is charged with the strategic direction of the Trust and is responsible to the Secretary of State for Education for ensuring compliance with all statutory regulations including the Articles, Funding Agreements and the Academy Trust Handbook.
- Holds the CEO to account for the overall performance of all the schools in the Trust and for the performance management of the staff. The CEO in turn holds the Headteacher in each school to account for their own school performance.
- Holds the CFO to account for the performance of the financial functions of the Trust ensuring that money is well spent.
- Forms Trust Committees to cover the work of the Trust.
- Ensures that processes are in place for the appointment of Trustees to the Trust Board, ensuring there is a balance of skills.
- Ensures that processes are in place for the appointment of Appointed Governors to each LGB ensuring there is a balance of skills.
- Determines Trust-wide policies as appropriate and monitors compliance at Trust level.
- Is the employer of all staff in the Trust.
- Ensures that the work of the Trust Board and all Trust Committees, including LGBs, is monitored and evaluated through skills audits, training and governor induction.

The Trust Subcommittees:

- Trust subcommittees are established by the Trust Board and are accountable to it for fulfilling the duties and responsibilities delegated through the Scheme of Delegation and their respective Terms of Reference. This includes ensuring implementation of required actions to maintain compliance with statutory and regulatory obligations.
- They provide oversight and monitoring of school activities across the Trust, offering both support and challenge to drive improvements and secure positive outcomes for students.
- Subcommittees may determine Trust-wide or school-specific policies and procedures, and are responsible for monitoring compliance with these at both Trust and school levels.

The Executive Leadership Team:

Chief Executive Officer (CEO): the CEO is responsible for providing the Trust Board—and relevant subcommittees—with appropriate information, advice, and support to enable effective governance. This includes submitting a termly CEO report to the Trust Board, outlining progress against the Trust's Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and other strategic priorities.

The CEO is the Trust's Accounting Officer and is accountable for the overall leadership and performance of the Trust, including ensuring compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements, and for delivering the Trust's strategy. The CEO is responsible for ensuring that public funds are used with regularity, propriety and value for money.

Chief Financial Officer (CFO): The CFO is responsible for the Trust's financial management, financial control and financial reporting, ensuring compliance with the Academy Trust Handbook and the Trust's funding agreement. The CFO supports the Accounting Officer in discharging responsibilities relating to regularity, propriety and value for money, and provides financial assurance to the Trust Board through the Finance and Resources Committee and supports the work of internal scrutiny and

external audit, including ensuring that recommendations relating to financial management and internal control are implemented in a timely manner.

Chief Infrastructure Officer (CIO), and Chief People Officer (CPO), Head of Governance (HoG): Executive leaders within shared professional services support the CEO in the provision of accurate and timely information to the Trust Board and its subcommittees, aligned to their areas of responsibility.

Headteachers: Headteachers are responsible for providing their Local Governing Body (LGB) with the necessary information, advice, and support to fulfil its functions. This includes a termly Headteacher report which covers school-level progress against agreed KPIs and other areas of accountability.

3. SCHEME OF DELEGATION

The Trust Board holds ultimate **accountability** for educational outcomes across all schools. This scheme of delegation sets out which **responsibilities** are retained, delegated, or shared across different governance tiers. It ensures clarity, alignment, and collective responsibility in delivering the Trust's purpose and education mission.

Section A: Education and Students Scheme of Delegation

This element of the Scheme of Delegation should be read in conjunction with the Trust's Education Development and Assurance (EDA) Framework.

Theme	Trust Board is responsible for:	Local Governing Bodies are responsible for:
Strategy, Policy and Plans	- Approving the strategy and operating model for the Trust, including the purpose and education mission. - Ensuring that meaningful stakeholder engagement takes place across the Trust.	- Contributing to the development of the strategy and operating model for the Trust, with a particular focus on the education mission. - Providing opportunities for parents, staff, students and local community to be able to engage with, and feedback to, the school
	Ensuring school development plans are in place and are aligned with the Trust strategy.	Approving the school's annual development plan (SDP) and ensuring it is in line with the Trust strategy.
	- Approving the Education Development and Assurance (EDA) Framework for the Trust. - Approving all Trust-wide policies and monitoring their implementation.	- Managing and delivering elements of the EDA Framework, and monitoring school-level review activity. - Ensuring all Trust-wide policies are enacted and approving local procedures where appropriate as per the Policy Register.
Monitoring School and Trust Performance	- Approving and monitoring Trust-wide Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and school performance targets. - Ensuring sufficient expertise and resources within each LGB to undertake their enhanced school-level scrutiny role.	- Approving and monitoring school-level KPIs. - Providing reports to Trust Board on school and Trust-level KPIs. - Analysing school performance data to improve outcomes. - Monitoring priority departments and tracking progress. - Monitoring outcomes, progress and experience of vulnerable or underrepresented student groups (SEND, PP, Bursary).
Teaching and Learning	Approving the education mission for the Trust and ensuring alignment with all schools.	- Implementing teaching and learning standards in line with Trust expectations. - Approving the school curriculum and assessment model within statutory and Trust frameworks.

	- Ensuring that a broad, balanced, and ambitious education is delivered across the Trust, including compliance with statutory curriculum requirements. - Approving Trust-wide policies related to teaching, learning, assessment, SEND, and Pupil Premium. - Monitoring the quality of education across the Trust, including the effectiveness of teaching, curriculum delivery, and educational equity.	- Monitoring the quality of teaching and its impact on student outcomes, including for vulnerable and underrepresented groups (e.g. SEND, Pupil Premium, Bursary). - Monitoring the effectiveness and impact of the school's CPD programme on teaching and learning. - Overseeing the school's self-evaluation processes and ensuring alignment with the School Development Plan. - Monitoring the delivery of the statutory RSHE curriculum and overseeing provision for personal development, wellbeing, and careers education (including the Gatsby Benchmarks).
Safeguarding	- Approving the Trust-wide Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and ensuring it complies with statutory guidance (e.g. Keeping Children Safe in Education). - Setting the strategic framework and procedures for safeguarding across all schools in the Trust. - Ensuring Trust-wide compliance with the Equality Act 2010 in relation to safeguarding, inclusion, and student welfare. - Monitoring outcomes and themes arising from safeguarding reports and Trust-wide audits. - Coordinating and reviewing the annual safeguarding audit across all schools. - Holding the Executive Leadership Team to account for the effective implementation of safeguarding across the Trust. <u>Delegated to Trust HR</u> - Ensuring safer recruitment procedures are in place across the Trust. - Managing the school and Trust-level Single Central Register.	- Ensuring local safeguarding procedures are applied consistently in line with the Trust-wide Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. - Approving all school-level policies related to safeguarding. - Monitoring the implementation of safeguarding practice at school-level, including training, reporting, and safer culture. - Appointing a named safeguarding link governor to liaise with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and report to the LGB. - Receiving termly reports from the Headteacher or DSL on safeguarding incidents, concerns, and training. - Ensuring all governors undertake appropriate safeguarding training, including on statutory duties.
Student Behaviour and Welfare	- Setting Trust-wide expectations for behaviour, attendance, and student welfare through the strategy and operating model. - Approving and reviewing Trust-wide policies on behaviour, suspensions, permanent exclusions, and related procedures.	- Setting and monitoring behavioural expectations at school level, in line with the Trust's strategy and policies. - Approving the school's behaviour policy and ensuring it reflects the school's ethos and statutory requirements.

	▪ Monitoring Trust-wide trends in behaviour, attendance, and exclusions to ensure consistency and equity. ▪ Ratifying the final stage of all exclusion processes, including appeals and review panels, in line with DfE statutory guidance	▪ Monitoring student attendance, behaviour, exclusions, and wellbeing data, including bullying and safeguarding culture. ▪ Overseeing early intervention strategies and ensuring appropriate support for students at risk of exclusion.
Self-Evaluation and Ofsted	▪ Ratifying post-Ofsted action plans and ensuring accountability for their implementation. ▪ Commissioning support and intervention where Ofsted reports require. ▪ Overseeing regular governance self-evaluation at both Board and LGB level, including external reviews where appropriate as per the EDA Framework. ▪ Ensuring outcomes from Ofsted inspections, peer reviews, and Trust quality assurance inform Trust-wide strategic planning. ▪ Monitoring the Trust's overall inspection profile and preparing for future inspection readiness.	▪ Agreeing school-level Ofsted action plans with the Headteacher and CEO following an inspection. ▪ Supporting inspection preparation, including contributing to governance documentation and meetings. ▪ Ensuring parents are appropriately informed about upcoming inspections and outcomes in a timely and clear manner. ▪ Conducting regular self-evaluation of LGB performance, including skills audits, attendance reviews, and training needs analysis. ▪ Providing constructive challenge and support to the Headteacher to ensure Ofsted readiness at all times.
Admissions	▪ Reviewing and approving the Admissions Policy for each school in the Trust, ensuring compliance with the School Admissions Code. ▪ Approving the arrangements for parental appeals and Sixth Form special consideration, as defined in the Admissions Policy. ▪ Monitoring Trust-wide student recruitment and admissions data to inform strategic planning and school place management.	▪ Ensuring that admissions arrangements are published at school level. ▪ Monitoring admissions trends and access within the school, and its impact on the education provision. ▪ Supporting outreach and communication with prospective students and families to ensure equitable access and clear understanding of the admissions process.

Section B: Operational and Organisational Scheme of Delegation

Finance

Trust Board is responsible for:	Trust Finance and Resources Committee is responsible for:
▪ Approving the Trust's overall financial strategy and ensuring long-term financial sustainability. ▪ Approving the final annual Trust-wide and individual school budgets following recommendation by the Finance Committee. ▪ Approving the Trust's statutory annual report and accounts, confirming that they provide a true and fair view of the Trust's financial position. ▪ Appointing the Chief Executive (who is the Trust's Accounting Officer) and the Chief Financial Officer (CFO), holding them to account for the financial health of the Trust and ensuring effective financial governance and internal control is in place. ▪ Ensuring the Trust complies with the Academy Trust Handbook, Charities SORP, and other relevant legislation and guidance. ▪ Monitoring the Register of Interests for the Trust. ▪ Holding the Finance Committee to account for the adequacy of financial oversight, risk management, and value for money across the Trust.	▪ Scrutinising the draft annual budget and recommending it to the Trust Board, ensuring alignment with the Trust's strategy and long-term sustainability. ▪ Liaising with each LGB to ensure the development plan needs of the schools are factored into the budget setting. ▪ Monitoring financial performance across the Trust, including variances, forecasts, and cash flow, and recommending corrective actions where necessary. ▪ Approving Trust-wide financial policies and ensuring the effectiveness of internal controls, including fraud prevention. ▪ Overseeing the findings of external auditors, and monitoring implementation of audit recommendations. ▪ Ensuring compliance with all financial regulations, including the Academy Trust Handbook and Charities SORP. ▪ Reviewing the Trust's asset management strategy and ensuring effective stewardship of resources and long-term capital planning. ▪ Advising the Trust Board on capital planning and resource prioritisation. ▪ Providing assurance to the Trust Board on the effectiveness of financial management, internal controls and value for money across the Trust.

Audit and Risk

Trust Board is responsible for:	Trust Governance, Audit and Risk Committee is responsible for:	Local Governing Bodies are responsible for:
▪ Approving the overall risk management policy and framework for the Trust and ensuring it supports strategic priorities and statutory compliance.	▪ Overseeing the Trust's risk management framework, including regular review of the Trust-wide Risk Register.	▪ Maintaining oversight of the school-level risk register and ensuring that material risks are identified, recorded, and escalated where appropriate.

▪ Approving and reviewing the Trust Risk Register. ▪ Recommending the appointment of the External Auditors to the Members, following a transparent and robust selection process. ▪ Appointing the Internal Scrutiny Partner in line with the Academy Trust Handbook, and monitoring the outcomes of internal audit activity annually. ▪ Approving the annual internal audit plan and ensuring it reflects key risk areas and operational priorities. ▪ Holding the Executive Leadership Team accountable for addressing any audit findings or governance risks identified. ▪ Approving governance-related statutory returns and overseeing compliance with legal and regulatory duties, including those set out in the Academy Trust Handbook and Charity Governance Code.	▪ Reviewing key risks termly, assessing mitigations, and recommending escalation where needed. ▪ Managing the appointment and oversight of external auditors to ensure independence and audit quality. ▪ Approving the internal audit plan and monitoring the performance of the Internal Scrutiny Partner. ▪ Ensuring internal control systems are effective, proportionate, and consistently applied across the Trust. ▪ Monitoring compliance with statutory duties and advising on emerging risks and governance changes. ▪ Reviewing and approving core governance policies (e.g. Code of Conduct, Conflict of Interest). ▪ Leading governance self-evaluation, skills audits, and training to strengthen Board and committee capacity. ▪ Overseeing ethical standards, including declarations of interest and whistleblowing arrangements.	▪ Ensuring local compliance with Trust-wide policies relating to financial controls, safeguarding, health and safety, and data protection. ▪ Supporting the implementation of internal audit recommendations relevant to the school. ▪ Ensuring that governors understand their statutory duties and comply with the Trust's Code of Conduct and Conflict of Interest Policy. ▪ Escalating concerns or breaches of governance, risk, or compliance to the CEO or Trust Governance, Audit & Risk Committee in a timely manner.
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Estates and Facilities

Trust Board is responsible for:	Trust Finance and Resources Committee is responsible for:	Local Governing Bodies are responsible for:
▪ Approving the strategic direction for estates and facilities across the Trust, including	▪ Overseeing the Trust's estates strategy, including condition, suitability, sufficiency,	▪ Contributing school-level context and user feedback to inform the Trust-wide Estates Master Plan and local facilities action plans.

approving the Trust-wide Estates Master Plan in consultation with each LGB. ▪ Approving all major capital projects and significant changes to the school estate, ensuring alignment with strategic priorities and value for money. ▪ Holding the Executive Leadership Team to account for the condition, safety, and compliance of all school buildings.	planned maintenance, capital investment, and sustainability. ▪ Reviewing and approving priorities for capital expenditure, including major projects, condition improvement works, and external funding bids. ▪ Monitoring the delivery, cost, risk, and value for money of estates and facilities projects, escalating significant matters to the Trust Board where required. ▪ Overseeing effective asset management, premises-related contracts, facilities management, and statutory compliance across the Trust estate.	▪ Monitoring premises issues, local facilities priorities, and the impact of the estate on education, safeguarding, accessibility, and the student and staff experience. ▪ Providing local oversight of school-level building projects, including progress and completion, in liaison with the Trust. ▪ Escalating premises, facilities, compliance, or health and safety concerns to the Trust where appropriate. ▪ Reviewing compliance data relating to premises, facilities and health and safety.
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Information Technology

Trust Board is responsible for:	Trust Finance and Resources Committee is responsible for:	Local Governing Bodies are responsible for:
▪ Setting the strategic direction for information technology, digital infrastructure, and Trust-wide systems. ▪ Approving major IT investment, significant system changes, and material changes to the Trust's digital operating model. ▪ Holding the Executive Leadership Team to account for the security, reliability, resilience, and effectiveness of IT provision across the Trust.	▪ Overseeing the Trust's IT strategy, including infrastructure, systems, devices, cyber security, and digital transformation. ▪ Reviewing major IT projects and investments, including system procurement, infrastructure upgrades, software licensing, and device replacement. ▪ Monitoring the effectiveness, resilience, value for money, and service quality of Trust-wide IT provision. ▪ Reviewing IT-related risks, including cyber security, disaster recovery, business continuity, system access, and data integrity.	▪ Contributing local context and feedback to inform Trust-wide IT planning and digital development. ▪ Monitoring the impact of IT systems, infrastructure, and support on teaching, learning, safeguarding, administration, and school operations. ▪ Supporting the implementation of Trust-wide IT policies, systems, and procedures at school level. ▪ Escalating concerns relating to IT reliability, cyber security, digital access, data protection, or system implementation to the Trust where appropriate.

Health and Safety

Trust Board is responsible for:	Local Governing Bodies are responsible for:
▪ Approving the Trust-wide Health and Safety Policy and ensuring that it is implemented across all schools. ▪ Overseeing the completion of the annual health and safety audit across all schools and monitoring any actions required. ▪ Approving the Trust-wide Critical Incident Management Policy and Procedure, and ensuring that senior staff receive sufficient training. ▪ Ensuring that all school trips meet appropriate health and safety standards and that there is Trust-wide oversight.	▪ Ensuring the school complies with the Trust-wide Health and Safety Policy and agreeing local procedures where appropriate. ▪ Reviewing the outcomes of the annual Health and Safety Audit and ensuring that required actions are implemented and monitored. ▪ Ensuring they are aware of the Trust-wide Critical Incident Management Policy and Procedure. ▪ Approving all off-site visits and residential trips and confirming that all necessary health and safety risk assessments, procedures, and policies have been followed.

Human Resources

Trust Board is responsible for:	Trust HR and Remuneration Committee is responsible for:	Local Governing Bodies are responsible for:
▪ Acting as the legal employer of all Trust staff and serving as the final point of appeal for staffing and HR-related matters. ▪ Approving the appointment of the CEO and CFO of the Trust, and other members of Executive Leadership Team (including Headteachers) as required. ▪ Ensuring compliance with HR legislation, national guidance, and the Trust's people policies. ▪ Approving the staff pay and benefits offer, including pensions and wellbeing initiatives.	▪ Overseeing the development and implementation of the Trust's HR strategy, ensuring alignment with strategic objectives and compliance with employment legislation. ▪ Reviewing and approving HR policies across the Trust. ▪ Monitoring recruitment, retention, staff well-being, and workforce data across the Trust. ▪ Reviewing the staff pay and benefits offer, including pensions and wellbeing initiatives, and monitoring its impact on recruitment and retention. ▪ Reviewing and enacting the remuneration and benefits package for all members of the Executive Leadership Team.	▪ Monitoring the impact of staffing on teaching quality, leadership capacity, and student outcomes within the school. ▪ Participating in the appointment of the Headteacher, alongside the Trust Board and CEO. ▪ Monitoring CPD provision and evaluating its impact on staff performance and student outcomes. ▪ Supporting recruitment to senior leadership positions within the school, in collaboration with the CEO and Headteacher.

Complaints

Trust Board is responsible for:	Local Governing Bodies are responsible for:
▪ Approving and reviewing the Trust-wide Complaints Policy in line with statutory guidance. ▪ Ensuring the complaints process is accessible, fair, and compliant with regulatory requirements. ▪ Participating in both Stage Two and Stage Three complaints where set out in the Complaints Policy. ▪ Monitoring the frequency, nature, and outcomes of complaints across all schools to inform strategic learning and policy development.	▪ Ensuring the Trust Complaints Policy is implemented consistently at school level (in conjunction with the CEO) ▪ Participating in both Stage Two and Stage Three complaints where set out in the Complaints Policy. ▪ Monitoring complaint patterns at the school level and escalating significant trends or concerns to the CEO.

4. POLICY STRUCTURE AND STATUTORY DOCUMENTS

Policies

Policies set out the Trust's principles, expectations, and mandatory requirements. They define what must be in place and ensure compliance with statutory duties, alignment with the Trust's strategy, and consistency across all schools.

All policies are formal governance documents and require approval at the appropriate governance level, as set out in the Scheme of Delegation. This will typically be the Trust Board or a delegated Trust committee. Policies apply Trust-wide (unless explicitly stated otherwise, or are school-specific) and are subject to regular review.

Procedures

Procedures set out how policies are implemented in practice. They provide the operational detail needed to deliver the requirements of each policy and may include guidance, protocols, and internal processes. Approval of amendments to procedures is delegated as follows:

- Trust-wide procedures are approved by the Executive Leadership Team (ELT).
- School-level procedures are approved by the School Senior Leadership Team (SLT).

All procedures must align with the relevant Trust or school policy. This approach ensures clear governance oversight of what is required, while enabling operational flexibility in how it is delivered, in line with the Trust's principle of autonomy with alignment.

Policy	First Approval Committee	Lead Staff
Governance		
Articles of Association	Members, Trust Board, DfE	CEO
Climate Change and Carbon Action Plan (S)	Trust Board	CIO
Complaints (S)	Governance, Audit and Risk	CEO
Conflict of Interest	Governance, Audit and Risk	CEO
Public Sector Equality Duty Statement (S)	Trust Board	CEO
Risk Management and Assurance	Governance, Audit and Risk	CEO
Risk Registers	Trust Board	ELT
Education and Students		
Education Development and Assurance Framework	Trust Board	CEO
Admissions (S) (by school)	Admissions	CEO
Allergens (S)	Trust Board	CEO
Alternative Provision	Trust Board	CEO
Safeguarding and Child Protection (S)	Trust Board	CPO
Online Safety Policy	Trust Board	CPO
Restrictive Interventions Policy	Trust Board	CPO
SEND (S)	Trust Board	CEO
Student Attendance	Trust Board	CEO
Student Suspensions and Exclusions Policy	Admissions	CEO
Finance		

Anti-Fraud and Bribery	Finance and Resources	CFO
Charges & Remissions (S)	Finance and Resources	CFO
Expenses	Finance and Resources	CFO
Financial Procedures Manual	Finance and Resources	CFO
Gifts and Hospitality	Finance and Resources	CFO
Procurement and Purchasing	Finance and Resources	CFO
Reserves	Finance and Resources	CFO
Treasury Management and Investment	Finance and Resources	CFO
Human Resources		
Anti Harassment and Bullying (S)	HR and Remuneration	CPO
Capability (S)	HR and Remuneration	CPO
Disciplinary (S)	HR and Remuneration	CPO
Family Leave	HR and Remuneration	CPO
Flexible Working	HR and Remuneration	CPO
Safer Recruitment Procedure	HR and Remuneration	CPO
Performance Development Review: Teaching	HR and Remuneration	CPO
Performance Development Review: Support	HR and Remuneration	CPO
Shared Parental Leave	HR and Remuneration	CPO
Sickness Absence	HR and Remuneration	CPO
Special Discretionary Leave	HR and Remuneration	CPO
Staff Code of Conduct	HR and Remuneration	CPO
Whistleblowing	HR and Remuneration	CPO
Pay and Benefits		
Pay and Benefits: Teaching	HR and Remuneration	CPO
Pay and Benefits: Support	HR and Remuneration	CPO
Pay and Benefits: Executive Leadership	HR and Remuneration	CPO
Relocation	HR and Remuneration	CPO
Data Protection		
CCTV	Governance, Audit and Risk	CIO
Data and Records Retention	Governance, Audit and Risk	Head of Governance
Data Protection and FOI	Governance, Audit and Risk	Head of Governance
Photographs and Media	Governance, Audit and Risk	Head of Governance
Health and Safety		
Health and Safety (S)	Trust Board	CIO
Critical Incident Management Policy and Procedure (CIMPP)	Governance, Audit and Risk	CEO
Risk Assessment	Governance, Audit and Risk	CIO
Accident Reporting	Governance, Audit and Risk	CIO
First Aid	Governance, Audit and Risk	CIO
Lone Working	Governance, Audit and Risk	CIO
Food Hygiene	Governance, Audit and Risk	CIO

Digital and IT		
Information Technology	Finance and Resources	CIO
Artificial Intelligence	Finance and Resources	CEO
School Based		
Anti-Bullying (S)	Local Governing Body	Headteacher
Accessibility Plan (S)	Local Governing Body	Headteacher
Career Policy Statement on Technical Provider access (S)	Local Governing Body	Headteacher
Home School Agreement	Local Governing Body	Headteacher
Relationships, Sex and Health Education (S)	Local Governing Body	Headteacher
Student Behaviour (S)	Local Governing Body	Headteacher
Supporting students with medical conditions (S)	Local Governing Body	Headteacher
Assessment and Reporting	Local Governing Body	Headteacher
Emergency Evacuation / Lockdown Procedures (S)	Local Governing Body	Headteacher
First Aid Room Procedures	Local Governing Body	Headteacher

S = Statutory

5. TRUST STRATEGY, OPERATING MODEL AND KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The strategy of the Trust, called “These Girls Will Thrive” is split into the following sections:

- A. It articulates our overall **purpose** and **education mission** that we have for our schools and our students.
- B. It identifies the key **enablers** at Trust level that will help us deliver this.
- C. It identifies key principles that drive our actions to help us to become effective, articulating this through a series of **commitments** between our schools, our staff and our students.
- D. It sets out the strategic rationale for our size, and when a function should be moved into a shared service or function for the Trust – what we call our **operating model**.
- E. It sets clear key performance indicators (KPIs) to **monitor and measure** our progress.

Our purpose: transforming lives through girls’ education.

For **students**, we help them achieve their full potential by creating an inclusive, supportive and aspirational learning environment. We equip them with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to thrive in school and in life, preparing them for their future.

For **staff**, we create a positive working environment where they are valued, supported, and motivated. We offer opportunities for development and career growth, encouraging collaboration and enabling everyone to contribute to the success of our students and the whole Trust.

For **schools**, we support and assure their education development with the freedom and autonomy to define their own values and priorities, respecting their individual character and unique identities. We promote collaboration across the Trust, enabling sharing of resources, exchanging ideas, and driving continuous improvement.

For **society**, we forge strong partnerships with parents, local groups, and other stakeholders to enrich our schools and students' educational experiences. We actively engage with the community to create a positive impact and foster a sense of civic responsibility in our students, staff and volunteers.

Our Education Mission: to empower girls to thrive through a holistic, rigorous and transformative education that nurtures their intellectual, emotional, and personal growth.

We believe in the limitless potential of our students. All our schools are empowered to develop their own education vision that reflects their local context and needs of their students. But this is underpinned by a shared belief in:

- 1. The transformative power of girls-only education
- 2. The holistic measurement of success based on the whole student
- 3. The prioritisation of student wellbeing and character development
- 4. The promotion of girls’ leadership rooted in strong values
- 5. The value of equity, diversity and inclusion

Read the full strategy: www.girlslearningtrust.org/about-us

Read about our KPIs: www.girlslearningtrust.org/about-us/kpis

6. ANNUAL CALENDAR OF COMMITTEE BUSINESS

Meeting timeframe	Local Governing Body	Admissions	HR and Remuneration	Finance and Resources	Governance, Audit and Risk	Trust Board
September/October	Annual School Review	- Approve NWSSEE pass mark - Appointment of Independent Appeals Clerk				- Appoint Chair and Vice Chair - Appoint LGB Vice Chairs - Appoint Committee Chairs - Master Risk Register - Trust KPIs - CEO Report - Feedback from ASRs - Statutory Items
October/ November/ December	- Headteacher's Report inc: exam results, ASR feedback - School Development Plan update - Pupil Premium plans - Infrastructure update (Premises, H&S and IT) - Safeguarding Update - Trust Update - Trust Committee Minutes - Risk Register	- Admissions report inc admissions trends, entrance exams process - Agree Admissions Policy for consultation - Risk Register	- CPO Report - Risk Register - CEO Pay Review and ELT Performance Development Reviews - Annual Safeguarding Report	- KPIs - Risk Register - Annual Report and Financial Accounts - CFO Report - CIO Report - Management Accounts - Capital Planning	- KPIs - Agree scope of Internal Scrutiny Plan 25/26 - Membership Update - Governance Handbook amendments (if any)	- CEO Report - Master Risk Register - Approve Annual Report and Accounts - Management Accounts to September - Membership Update - LGB Summaries and minutes - Committee summaries Annual General Meeting to follow: - Review of annual report and accounts - Appointment of Appointed Trustees
February/ March	- Headteacher's Report inc: mock analysis - Development plan update - Pupil Premium performance - Safeguarding update - Trust update - Trust Committee minutes - Curriculum /options update - Infrastructure update (Premises, H&S and IT) - Local policies - Risk Register	-	- CPO Report - Gender Pay Gap Report - Risk Register	- Financial update/forecast - Budget process - CFO Report - CIO Report - KPIs - Risk Register - Management Accounts	- Risk Register - Internal Scrutiny Report 1 and management response - Membership updates	- Master Risk Register - CEO Report - Trust KPIs - LGB Summaries and minutes - Committee summaries - Management Accounts to December
May/June/July	- Headteacher's Report - Development plan update - Pupil Premium performance - Safeguarding update - Trust update - Trust Committee minutes - Curriculum /options update - Infrastructure update (Premises, H&S and IT)	- Admissions Report - Appeals information - Sixth Form Recruitment information - Risk Register	- CPO Report - Risk Register - Staffing update - Pay awards (approval envelope) - KPIs	- Recommend Annual Budget for approval - External Audit Plan for financial year - Risk Register - Management Accounts - CFO Report - CIO Report	- Risk Register - Internal Scrutiny Report 2 and management response - End of year Internal Scrutiny Report - Membership updates	- CEO Report - Master Risk Register - Trust KPIs - Review of Trust Annual Development Plan - Internal Scrutiny Report - Approve Annual Budget - Membership Updates

	▪ Local policies ▪ Risk Register					▪ Approve Governance Handbook for following year ▪ Approve Board and Committee Terms of Reference for following year
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7. TRUST BOARD

1. Constitution

The Trust Board is the overall governing body of the Trust as set out in the Articles of Association. It is charged with setting and monitoring the strategic direction of the Trust and is responsible to the Secretary of State for Education for ensuring compliance with all statutory regulations including the Articles, Funding Agreements and the Academy Trust Handbook.

Strategic leadership of the Trust: the Board defines the trust vision for high quality and inclusive education in line with its charitable objects. It establishes and fosters the Trust's culture and sets and champions the Trust strategy including determining what, if any, governance functions are delegated to the local tier.

Accountability and assurance: the Board has robust effective oversight of the operations and performance of the Trust, including the provision of education, student welfare, overseeing and ensuring appropriate use of funding and effective financial performance and keeping their estate safe and well maintained.

Engagement: the Board has strategic oversight of relationships with stakeholders. The Board involves parents, schools and communities so that decision-making is supported by meaningful engagement.

2. Membership

- Up to 8 Trustees appointed by the Members
- The CEO (if appointed to the Board by the Members)
- Additional Trustees may be co-opted in accordance with the Articles
- The CEO will be 'in attendance' if not appointed a Trustee
- The CFO will be 'in attendance' alongside other members of the ELT

The Chair and Vice Chair of the Board will be appointed annually by the Trust Board.

3. Quorum

The quorum for a meeting of the Trust Board shall be determined by the rule set out at Article 117 of the GLT Articles of Association:

"The quorum for a meeting of the Board and any vote on any matter thereat, shall be any three members, or where greater, any one third (rounded up to a whole number) of the total number of members of the Board at the date of the meeting, who are in each case present at the meeting and entitled to vote on the matters to be resolved."

4. Voting

Subject to Articles 117-119, every question to be decided at a meeting of the Trustees shall be determined by a majority of the votes of the Trustees present and voting on the question. Every Trustee shall have one vote. Where there is an equal division of votes, the chair of the meeting shall have a casting vote in addition to any other vote she/he may have.

5. Attendance at Meetings

Attendance at Board meetings is monitored and reported in the Trust's Annual Report & Accounts. Attendance by video or telephone conference call is acceptable and may be arranged in advance.

Repeated non-attendance may lead to an individual's position on the Board being rescinded in accordance with the Article 70:

“A Trustee shall cease to hold office if he is absent without the permission of the Trustees from all their meetings held within a period of six months and the Trustees resolve that his office be vacated.”

6. Frequency of Meetings

The Trust Board will meet *at least* 4 times per year, including at least once every term. It may meet more frequently if needed.

7. Duties and Responsibilities

In overall terms the Trust Board is responsible for:

- Setting the strategic vision and direction for the Trust and its academies.
- Approving and overseeing the implementation of Trust-wide policies and procedures.
- Monitoring and evaluating the educational performance of the academies.
- Ensuring robust financial management, including the approval of budgets and financial statements.
- Ensuring compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements, including safeguarding and health and safety.
- Fostering a culture of continuous improvement and innovation across the Trust.
- Engaging with stakeholders, including parents, students, staff, and the wider community.
- Acting as the employers of all staff within the Trust.
- Overseeing the recruitment, performance management, and remuneration of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and other senior leaders.

8. Provisions for Urgent Approvals (‘Chair’s Action’)

In circumstances where an urgent decision is needed, and cannot wait for the next Board meeting, the Chair of the Board, at their discretion can:

- Require a call by telephone or video conference with all committee members.
- Jointly approve the matter, together with the Vice Chair of the Board or another Board member.
- Individually approve the matter if it is reasonable to do so.

In all cases, the decision must be reported to the next meeting of the committee.

9. Independent Clerking Arrangements

The proceedings of the Trust Board will be clerked and minuted in line with all other Trust committees and stored via the online portal GovernorHub.

10. Arrangements for Review

The Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually by the Board at the final meeting of each academic year for use in the upcoming academic year.

8. SUBCOMMITTEES / TASK AND FINISH GROUPS

The Trust Board will delegate work to a Committee only when the following principles apply:

- i. Added value: when doing so is preferable to undertaking the work by the full Trust Board or by delegating the work to key individuals.

This added value should largely be based on one of the follow four principles:

- ii. Focussed expertise or experience: in cases where the subject matter requires specific skills or experience to understand and fully engage with the topic being considered.
- iii. Increased assurance: in cases where the subject matter requires significant additional time, detail or commitment for assurance to be obtained on behalf of the Trust Board.
- iv. Increased engagement: in cases where the involvement of specific key individuals in greater detail or depth (that may or may not be a member of the Trust Board) is beneficial for the organisation.
- v. Increased agility or speed: in cases where the Trust Board is required to respond to a specific challenge or deliver a specific piece of work within a compressed timeline.

Standing Subcommittees

These are required where there is a substantial business need for the subcommittee, and there is an expectation that it will meet regularly over the course of the year. The annual calendar of committee business will include approximate dates and an indicative agenda.

Task and Finish Groups

These are required where there is a substantial business need (including responding to a specific critical incident) for a smaller group of Trustees and staff to consider / develop specific projects of areas of work. They should be time limited with a narrowly defined SMART remit.

Aspect	Standing Subcommittee	Task and Finish Group
Purpose	Ongoing oversight and management of specific areas within the Trust.	Address a specific issue, project, or task and disband after completion.
Duration	Permanent or long-term.	Temporary; and disbanded after task completion.
Scope	Broad, ongoing responsibilities within its designated area.	Narrow, focused on a specific task or issue.
Formation	Established as part of the Trust's permanent structure.	Formed on an ad-hoc basis for a specific purpose.
Membership	Consists of members who serve for extended periods, often with regular rotations.	Comprises individuals with relevant expertise for the specific task, the membership dissolves upon completion.
Meetings	Regular, ongoing meetings as part of standard governance processes.	Scheduled as needed to accomplish the specific task; may be more frequent in the short term.
Decision-Making	Involved in continuous decision-making within its scope.	Makes recommendations for one-time decisions based on their findings.
Flexibility	Less flexible; has a fixed structure and ongoing responsibilities.	Highly flexible; formed and disbanded based on the organization's needs.

Provisions for All Subcommittees / Task and Finish Groups

1. Quorum

The quorum shall be determined by the same rule as set out at Article 117 of the GLT Articles of Association:

“The quorum for a meeting and any vote on any matter thereat, shall be any three members, or where greater, any one third (rounded up to a whole number) of the total number of members of the Committee at the date of the meeting, who are in each case present at the meeting and entitled to vote on the matters to be resolved.”

2. Attendance at Meetings

Attendance at meetings is monitored and reported in the Trust’s Annual Report & Accounts. Attendance by telephone or video conference call is acceptable and may be arranged in advance. Repeated non-attendance may lead to an individual’s position on the subcommittee being rescinded in accordance with the Articles.

3. Provisions for Urgent Approvals (‘Chair’s Action’)

In circumstances where an urgent decision is needed, and cannot wait for the next subcommittee meeting, the Chair, at their discretion can:

- Require a call by telephone or video conference with all subcommittee members
- Jointly approve the matter, together with the Vice Chair
- Individually approve the matter, if it is reasonable to do so

In all cases, the decision must be reported to the next meeting of the subcommittee.

4. Reporting Procedures

The subcommittee will report to the Trust Board and will submit relevant documentation as required.

5. Independent Clerking Arrangements

The proceedings will be clerked and minuted in line with Trust Board proceedings and stored via the online portal GovernorHub.

6. Arrangements for Review

The Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually at the final meeting of the Trust Board each academic year. Any proposals and/or recommendations for change will be presented for approval to the next meeting of the Trust Board.

9. LOCAL GOVERNING BODIES (LGBs)

1. Constitution

The Local Governing Body (LGB) in each school is a subcommittee of Trust Board with delegated responsibilities related to oversight and monitoring of the school's activities in pursuit of positive student outcomes, progress and experience.

2. Membership

- Chair of the LGB (a Trustee appointed by the Trust Board)
- 5 Appointed Governors
- 2 Parent Governors (elected by the parent body)
- 2 Staff Governors (elected by the staff body)
- The Headteacher of the school
- Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and other senior Trust staff in attendance
- Trustees may attend LGB meetings, letting the Chair of the LGB and Chair of Trust Board know in advance.

The Chair of the Trust Board may also attend as an additional member of the committee from time to time and when in attendance shall be treated like any other member of the committee for voting purposes.

The Chair and Vice Chair of the LGB will be appointed annually by the Trust Board.

Staff governors may not be a member of the school's Senior Leadership Team. If a Staff Governor joins the Senior Leadership Team during their term, they must resign from the Local Governing Body.

3. Frequency of Meetings

The LGB will meet *at least* 3 times per year, including at least once every term. It may meet more frequently if needed.

4. Duties and Responsibilities

The Trust Board has delegated the following duties and responsibilities to the LGB (in line with the Scheme of Delegation).

Development Plans and Policies

- Set and ensure the delivery of the school's development plan, in line with the Trust strategic plan and KPIs.
- Produce an annual schedule of LGB agenda items, in conjunction with the Headteacher, to ensure that the work of the LGB delivers the school development plan.
- Ensure compliance against Trust policies where appropriate, and approve local school policies and procedures where appropriate.

School Performance

- Analyse student progress and attainment data in order to improve performance and meet the school KPIs for all students.
- Monitor the performance of vulnerable students in the school (inc Pupil premium and SEND).
- Identify and monitor the progress of priority departments in the school.

Teaching and Learning

- Agree the curriculum and assessment procedures of the school in line with the Trust expectations and statutory requirements.

- Ensure the provision of social, moral, cultural, mental and physical development for students in the school, including Relationships, Sex and Health Education.
- Ensure the provision of independent careers information, advice and guidance in the school.
- Monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and school self evaluation activities including departmental reviews, ensuring any actions link to the school development plans.
- Monitor the impact of CPD activities across the school.

Safeguarding

- Agree any local procedures for safeguarding in line with the Trust policy.
- Review the annual safeguarding audit of the safeguarding work of the school and monitor actions.

Student Behaviour and Welfare

- Determine and monitor the relevant behaviour and discipline policies for the school.
- Monitor attendance figures and those relating to student welfare including bullying and fixed term exclusions.

Estates (in liaison with the Trust CIO)

- Agree a facilities action plan for the school, as appropriate, in line with the Trust masterplan and user input/school requirements.
- Provide oversight for any building projects and monitoring progress and completion.

Health and Safety

- Ensure the school adheres to the Trust policy and determine local school procedures as required.
- Monitor any actions required by the annual Health & Safety Audit conducted by the Trust.
- Ensure that the school's Disaster Recovery and Critical Incident plans are implemented.
- Approve all school trips and confirm that all H&S procedures have been followed.

Ofsted

- Ensure the Ofsted framework is understood by all LGB members to ensure effective representation at an Ofsted inspection.
- Ensure that an action plan to be ratified by the Trust Board is in place following an Ofsted inspection.

Stakeholder Engagement

- Ensure the provision of opportunities for parents, staff, students and the local community to be able to engage with and feedback to the school.

Other

- Contribute to the wider work of the Trust through LGB members serving on other Trust committees.
- Monitor the school Risk Register at every LGB meeting.
- Ensure that the Trust complaints policy is implemented in the school and that the nature and frequency of complaints is monitored.
- Ensure that the LGB carries out a self-evaluation of performance in line with the Trust requirements.

5. Link Governors

In line with statutory requirements and best practice, all LGBs are required to appoint Link Governors for the following three areas. Beyond this, each LGB should determine its own structure based on the priorities set out in the school development plan:

- i. Safeguarding (statutory requirement)
- ii. SEND provision (statutory requirement)
- iii. Careers education and guidance (DfE guidance)
- iv. Student attendance

See section 16 below for more information on the role of Link Governors.

10. TRUST FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

1. Constitution

A subcommittee with delegated responsibilities from the Trust Board to oversee the Trust's financial strategy, financial performance, and resource management. This includes responsibility for finance, estates, IT, and non-HR related operational resources, comprising representatives of the Trust Board and Local Governing Bodies ('LGB') in a combined committee structure.

2. Membership

- Up to 5 Trust Board Members
- The CEO and Accounting Officer
- 1 LGB member per School – approved by Trust Board
- CFO and CIO in attendance

The Chair of the Trust Board may also attend as an additional member of the committee from time to time and when in attendance shall be treated like any other member of the committee for voting purposes.

The Chair of the Finance Committee will be appointed annually by the Trust Board. The Vice Chair will be appointed annually by the Finance Committee.

3. Frequency of Meetings

The Finance Committee will meet *at least* 3 times per year, including at least once every term. It may meet more frequently if needed.

4. Duties and Responsibilities

The Trust Board has delegated the following duties and responsibilities to the Finance Committee:

Budgeting and Financial Performance Monitoring

- Scrutinise the draft annual budget prepared by the Trust's Executive Leadership Team.
- Recommend the budget for approval to the Trust Board, ensuring it aligns with the Trust's strategic objectives and financial sustainability.
- Regularly review financial reports, including income statements, balance sheets, and cash flow statements.
- Monitor actual financial performance against the budget, identifying variances and ensuring corrective actions are taken where necessary.

Policies and Financial Controls

- Review and approve financial policies, including procurement, expense reimbursement, and financial reserves.
- Ensure policies are compliant with statutory and regulatory requirements and promote best practices in financial management.
- Ensure effective financial control systems are in place to prevent fraud and misuse of funds.
- Oversee the implementation and effectiveness of internal controls across the Trust.

External Audit, Compliance and Assurance (with Governance, Audit and Risk Committee)

- Oversee the selection and appointment of external auditors, ensuring a robust and transparent tender process.
- Review the external auditor's proposed audit plan, scope, and fees.
- Review the external auditor's reports and management letters, monitoring the implementation of recommendations.

- Ensure the Trust complies with the Academies Financial Handbook, the Charities Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP), and other relevant regulations.

Estates and Asset Management

- Oversee the strategic management of the Trust's estate, ensuring it is safe, compliant, and supports high-quality education.
- Review and monitor the Trust's estates strategy, including condition, suitability, and sufficiency of buildings.
- Ensure effective asset management planning, including maintenance, capital investment, and sustainability.
- Monitor compliance with statutory obligations relating to health and safety, estates, and premises management (in conjunction with relevant policies and assurance mechanisms).

Information Technology and Digital Infrastructure

- Oversee the strategic development and effectiveness of the Trust's IT and digital infrastructure, ensuring it supports teaching, learning, and operational efficiency.
- Monitor investment in IT systems, including MIS, HRIS, finance systems, and cybersecurity arrangements.
- Ensure appropriate controls and assurance are in place in relation to cyber security, data protection, and system resilience.
- Review major IT projects and implementations, ensuring alignment with Trust priorities and value for money.

Other Responsibilities

- Review the Trust's annual report and financial statements, ensuring they provide a true and fair view of the Trust's financial position.
- Recommend the annual report and financial statements for approval by the Trust Board.
- Ensure the Trust's assets, including property and equipment, are managed effectively and maintained appropriately.
- Review the asset management strategy and ensure it supports the Trust's long-term sustainability.

11. TRUST HR AND REMUNERATION COMMITTEE

1. Constitution

A subcommittee with delegated responsibilities from the Trust Board to monitor the Trust's HR performance and processes, comprising representatives of the Trust Board.

2. Membership

- A minimum of 5 Trust Board members
- CEO and CPO in attendance (CEO not in attendance for CEO remuneration item)

The Chair of the Trust Board may also attend as an additional member of the committee from time to time and when in attendance shall be treated like any other member of the committee for voting purposes.

The Chair of the HR and Remuneration Committee will be appointed annually by the Trust Board. The Vice Chair will be appointed annually by the HR and Remuneration Committee.

3. Frequency of Meetings

The HR and Remuneration Committee will meet at least 3 times per year, including at least once every term. It may meet more frequently if needed.

4. Duties and Responsibilities

The Trust Board has delegated the following duties and responsibilities to the HR Committee:

Human Resources Strategy and Policies

- Review and approve the Trust's HR strategy, ensuring it aligns with the Trust's overall strategic objectives.
- Monitor the implementation of the HR strategy and make recommendations for improvement.
- Review and approve HR policies.
- Ensure policies comply with employment law, regulatory requirements, and best practices.
- Oversee organizational development initiatives to ensure the Trust has the capacity and capability to achieve its goals.
- Ensure the Trust complies with all employment laws and regulations.
- Monitor changes in employment law and best practices, and update policies accordingly.

Performance Management and Staff Development

- Oversee the development and implementation of performance development review systems, including scrutinising objectives for the Executive Leadership Team.
- Ensure the performance development review process is undertaken in accordance with the policy, providing opportunities for staff development and feedback.
- Promote a culture of continuous professional development.
- Ensure adequate resources are allocated for staff training and development programmes.
- Support the development of leadership skills at all levels of the organization.
- Oversee specific leadership development programmes and initiatives.

Remuneration and Benefits

- Develop and review the Trust's Teaching and Support Staff Pay and Benefits Policy, ensuring they are fair, competitive, and aligned with the Trust's objectives.
- Ensure the framework reflects the Trust's commitment to pay equity and transparency.
- Develop and review the Trust's Executive Leadership Pay and Benefits Policy for the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and other members of the Executive Leadership Team.

12. TRUST GOVERNANCE, AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE

1. Constitution

A subcommittee with delegated responsibilities from the Trust Board to be responsible for ensuring effective governance across the Trust.

2. Membership

- Up to 5 Trust Board members
- Chair of Trust Board
- CEO and Head of Governance in attendance

The Chair of the Governance, Audit and Risk Committee will be appointed annually by the Trust Board. The Vice Chair will be appointed annually by the Committee.

3. Frequency of Meetings

The Governance, Audit and Risk Committee will meet at least 3 times per year, including at least once every term. It may meet more frequently if needed.

4. Duties and Responsibilities

The Trust Board has delegated the following duties and responsibilities to the Governance, Audit & Risk Committee:

Governance Development

- Develop and review the Trust's governance framework, including its structure, policies, and procedures.
- Ensure the framework supports the Trust's strategic objectives and complies with statutory and regulatory requirements.
- Review and approve key governance policies, such as the code of conduct for trustees and committee members, conflict of interest policy, and terms of reference for all committees.
- Ensure policies are updated regularly to reflect changes in legislation and best practices.

Trust Board and Subcommittee Effectiveness

- Review the composition of the Trust Board and its subcommittees to ensure they have the necessary skills, diversity, and expertise.
- Develop and oversee a skills matrix to identify gaps and inform recruitment and training needs.
- Oversee the recruitment and selection process for new trustees and subcommittee members.
- Ensure effective induction programmes are in place for new trustees and committee members to familiarise them with the Trust's governance framework and strategic priorities.
- Develop and monitor a training and development plan for trustees and committee members.
- Ensure ongoing professional development opportunities are available to enhance governance effectiveness.
- Conduct regular evaluations of the performance and effectiveness of the Trust Board and its committees.
- Use the findings to make recommendations for improvements and address any identified issues.

Risk Management

- Develop and maintain a comprehensive risk management framework.
- Ensure a systematic approach to identifying, assessing, and managing risks across the Trust.
- Regularly review the Trust's risk register to identify principal risks and ensure they are effectively managed.

- Assess the likelihood and impact of key risks, prioritising them based on their potential effect on the Trust's objectives.
- Ensure appropriate risk mitigation strategies and action plans are in place.
- Monitor the effectiveness of risk management activities and make recommendations for improvements.
- Ensure the Trust has adequate insurance coverage to protect against significant risks.
- Review insurance policies annually and make recommendations for changes or additional coverage as needed.

Compliance & Internal Audit

- Ensure the Trust complies with all relevant statutory and regulatory requirements, including the Academies Financial Handbook and the Charity Governance Code.
- Monitor changes in governance legislation and guidance, advising the Trust Board on necessary actions.
- Approve the internal audit plan and ensure it covers key risk areas.
- Review internal audit reports, findings, and management responses.
- Monitor the implementation of internal audit recommendations to strengthen internal controls.
- Oversee the Trust's whistleblowing policy and procedures, ensuring staff can report concerns confidentially and without fear of reprisal.
- Monitor the Trust's fraud prevention measures and ensure robust procedures are in place to detect and respond to fraud.

Ethical Standards and Conduct

- Review and uphold the Trust's code of conduct for trustees and committee members, ensuring high standards of integrity and ethical behaviour.
- Address any breaches of the code of conduct in a timely and appropriate manner.
- Ensure all trustees and committee members declare any conflicts of interest and manage these in accordance with the Trust's conflict of interest policy.
- Maintain a register of interests and ensure it is updated regularly.

5. Declarations of Interest

Given the remit and nature of this committee, it is likely that one or more members of the committee will have an interest in one or more agenda items at each meeting. Where an interest is identified by a committee member, it should be highlighted and minuted. The committee should discuss the interest and decide on each case whether it represents a conflict of interest for the member concerned. If a conflict of interest is identified, the member concerned should withdraw from the meeting for the remainder of the discussion of that agenda item and the other members present will decide on the matter. Should the removal of the conflicted member for that agenda item render the committee inquorate, any decision required should be postponed either to the next meeting of this committee or to the next Trust Board meeting, unless the matter is urgent, in which case Chair's action can be considered.

Should the situation arise whether there is a conflict of interest for all members of the committee on a matter, a discussion should be held on the matter, with any decision made being dependent on the matter being brought to the next full Trust Board meeting to ensure the conflict of interest is appropriately mitigated.

13. TRUST ADMISSIONS COMMITTEE

1. Constitution

A subcommittee with delegated responsibilities from the Trust Board to determine and monitor the student admissions process, comprising representatives of the Trust Board and Local Governing Bodies ('LGB') in a combined committee structure.

2. Membership

- A minimum of 3 Trust Board Members
- Chief Executive Officer
- 1 LGB Member from each school
- Headteachers (in attendance)
- Head of Governance (in attendance)

The Chair of the Trust Board may also attend as an additional member of the committee from time to time and when in attendance shall be treated like any other member of the committee for voting purposes.

The Chair of the Admissions Committee will be appointed annually by the Trust Board. The Vice Chair will be appointed annually by the Admissions Committee.

3. Frequency of Meetings

The Admissions Committee will meet *at least* 2 times per year. It may meet more frequently if needed.

4. Duties and Responsibilities

The Trust Board has delegated the following duties and responsibilities to the Admissions Committee:

- Develop, review, and recommend to the Trust Board the admissions policy for each school within the Trust.
- Ensure the admissions policy complies with the School Admissions Code and other relevant legislation.
- Ensure that admissions criteria are applied consistently across the Trust and monitor data to track this.
- Make appropriate arrangements for special consideration for Sixth Form applications.
- Encourage and promote admissions from all eligible students including those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

14. TRUST EXCLUSIONS COMMITTEE

1. Constitution

A 'task and finish group' subcommittee with delegated responsibilities from the Trust Board to review suspension and exclusion decisions in line with statutory guidelines and Trust / school policies.

2. Membership

Three individuals appointed by the Chair of Trust Board from the following:

- Trustees
- Local Governing Body Members
- Chief Executive Officer

Members should be selected to ensure impartiality and independence, with none having prior involvement in the suspension or exclusion decision, any relationship with the student or their family, or conflicts of interest.

In attendance

The following parties will be invited to a meeting of the Exclusions Committee and allowed to make representations or share information:

- Parents / carers, or the student if they are 18 or older (and, if requested, a representative or friend)
- The student, if they are under 18 and it is appropriate for their age and understanding (and, if requested, a representative or friend)
- The Headteacher
- The student's social worker, if applicable
- The Virtual School Head (VSH), if the student is looked after

The Chair of the Committee shall be a Trustee who is not the Chief Executive Officer.

3. Attendance at Meetings

The meeting may be held remotely at the request of the parents / carers, or the student if they are 18 or older. If no preference is expressed, the meeting should be conducted in person.

In cases of extraordinary or unforeseen circumstances that make an in-person meeting impracticable, the meeting will be held remotely. Remotely accessed meetings must follow the same procedural requirements as in-person meetings.

Before agreeing to hold a meeting remotely, the school / Trust will ensure the following conditions are met:

- All participants have access to technology that allows them to hear, speak, see, and be seen.
- All participants will be able to participate fully.
- The remote meeting can proceed in a fair and transparent manner.
- Social workers and the Virtual School Head (VSH) may always join remotely, regardless of whether the meeting is held in person, provided they meet the conditions for remote access listed above.

If unresolved technical issues during a remote meeting compromise effective participation or prevent fair and transparent proceedings, the meeting will be promptly rescheduled as an in-person meeting.

4. Frequency of Meetings

The Exclusions Committee will meet as required by the Student Suspensions and Exclusions Policy.

5. Duties and Responsibilities

The Trust Board has delegated the following duties and responsibilities to the Exclusions Committee:

- Review exclusion decisions to determine if the student should be reinstated
- Hear parental appeals, as appropriate, ensuring fairness and transparency.

The Exclusions Committee can either:

- Decline to reinstate the student, or
- Direct the reinstatement of the student immediately, or on a particular date.

In reaching its decision, the Exclusions Committee will review whether the exclusion was lawful, reasonable, and procedurally fair, and whether the Headteacher adhered to legal duties. The Committee will use the “balance of probabilities” standard (different from the criminal standard of “beyond reasonable doubt”) to assess whether facts are true, alongside any relevant evidence related to the exclusion.

6. Reporting Procedures

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for monitoring the use of suspensions and exclusions.

Local Governing Bodies and the Trust Board are jointly accountable for monitoring suspensions and exclusions termly, annually, and over three years to ensure no student group is unfairly impacted and that individual needs are met.

7. Independent Clerking Arrangements

The proceedings will be clerked and minuted in line with all other Trust committee proceedings and stored via the online portal GovernorHub.

15. TRUST COMMITTEES PROTOCOL

Meeting Preparation

The following members of the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) have responsibility for the preparation of meeting agendas and coordinating the preparation of papers. Reference should be made to the calendar of business in this handbook.

Committee	Lead Staff Support
Trust Board	CEO & Head of Governance
Trust Finance and Resources	CFO & CIO
Trust Governance, Audit & Risk	CEO & Head of Governance
Trust HR & Remuneration	CPO
Trust Admissions	CEO & Head of Governance
Trust Exclusions	CEO & Head of Governance
Local Governing Bodies	Headteachers

The Lead for each committee will contact the Chair of the committee at least 10 days before the meeting to finalise the agenda and agree the required papers and timings for each item.

If necessary, the proposed agenda will then be sent to the Clerk of the committee for feedback to ensure all necessary governance items are included.

The Head of Governance will then format this into an agenda document and co-ordinate the collection of materials for the meeting. The ELT member (as appropriate) will be responsible for the quality of these materials.

The agenda and papers will be circulated one week before the meeting to all members of the committee and the clerks. This will be done by e-mail from Governor Hub unless otherwise instructed. Paper copies will only be printed for Trustees and Governors on request.

Meeting Management

Apologies for absence should be provided to the Clerk at least 24 hours before a meeting.

All members should aim to arrive for the meeting on time. Where possible if a member is held up or cannot attend at the last minute the Chair should be contacted by text or phone.

Meeting attendees are responsible for bringing their own electronic or paper copies of materials to the meetings.

The Chair of the committee should ensure that the time slots on the agenda are adhered to.

Purpose of Papers

All papers should clearly identify their purpose as one of three types:

For Noting

These papers are provided to committee members to inform them about certain issues, updates, or developments. These papers are intended to keep members informed without requiring any decision or action.

What it means for Committee members:

- Awareness: members need to read and understand the information presented.

- No Action Required: members do not need to debate, discuss in depth, or make any decisions regarding these papers. They simply acknowledge the content.
- Record Keeping: the information is officially recorded as having been shared with the committee.

For Consideration

These papers are presented to the committee for discussion and deliberation. These papers often outline proposals, issues, or options that require the committee's input and feedback.

What it means for Committee members:

- Discussion: members are expected to review the content carefully and come prepared to discuss the implications, provide input, and possibly suggest alternatives.
- Feedback: members provide their opinions and perspectives to shape the final decision or recommendation.
- Decision Pending: while no final decision is made solely based on these papers, they inform the decision-making process, which may occur at a later stage or in subsequent meetings.

For Approval

These papers contain proposals or decisions that require the formal agreement or endorsement of the committee. These papers often include detailed information and recommendations that have been considered previously.

What it means for Committee members:

- Final Decision: members need to review the proposal thoroughly and make a formal decision to approve or reject it.
- Due Diligence: members should ensure they fully understand the implications of the approval and that any necessary due diligence has been conducted.
- Record of Decision: the outcome of the approval process is formally recorded in the meeting minutes, reflecting the committee's official stance on the matter.

Type	Definition	Member Responsibilities
For Noting	Information for members' awareness, no action required	Read, understand, acknowledge
For Consideration	Proposals/issues requiring discussion and feedback	Review, discuss, provide input
For Approval	Proposals requiring formal agreement and decision	Review thoroughly, decide to approve or reject, ensure due diligence

Format of Meeting Papers

All papers being presented to the Trust Board/Trust Committees or LGBs should use the agreed paper template and include:

- Title of Paper
- Date of Paper
- Presenter (name and job title)
- Purpose of the Paper (for noting, for consideration, for approval)
- Executive Summary if required (a short explanation that gives an understanding of the subject and any conclusions, key messages, recommendations, desired outcomes and should be no longer than one page)
- Appendices if needed (where detailed tables, information can be added)
- All papers should be in pdf format

Post Meeting

The Clerk will provide draft minutes for initial approval within 10 working days of the meeting using the agreed format of three columns and detailed numbering for ease of reference.

Where an action is required this should be clearly identified in the right hand column using the person's initials

The draft minutes will be sent in the first instance to the ELT Lead for amendments (via tracked changes). They should then pass their amended minutes to the Chair of the committee (copying to the Clerk) for them to add their amendments (also via tracked changes). The Chair should then pass to the Clerk in order that they can be formatted into a "clean copy" and submitted for formal approval at the next meeting.

The final minutes should be completed within 15 working days of the date of the meeting

16. LINK GOVERNORS

Link Governors are appointed by the Local Governing Body (LGB) to provide strategic oversight, informed challenge, and assurance in specific areas of school activity. These areas may be statutory (e.g. Safeguarding, SEND, Careers Education) or linked to Trust or school development priorities (e.g. Wellbeing, Curriculum, Pupil Premium, or Health & Safety).

While Link Governors are not responsible for managing the day-to-day operations of their assigned area, they play a vital governance role in monitoring implementation, ensuring accountability, and supporting continuous improvement.

Core Functions

The general duties of Link Governors are to:

- Enhance accountability: act as a critical friend to the designated school lead, providing an additional layer of scrutiny on progress, compliance, and outcomes.
- Strengthen governance insight: build a deeper understanding of specific areas of school operations, enabling the LGB to hold leaders to account more effectively.
- Support strategic priorities: monitor the implementation of key development plan priorities and evaluate their impact over time.
- Promote transparency and assurance: ensure that statutory duties and Trust policies are being implemented and regularly reviewed.
- Facilitate informed reporting: provide termly verbal or written updates to the LGB on the area of link responsibility, highlighting risks, successes, and areas for improvement.

Link roles do not reduce or replace the Board's collective responsibility. The LGB must ensure that any area assigned to a Link Governor is appropriately covered in full board and committee meetings, so all governors can contribute to relevant discussions and decisions.

Ways of Working

Across all schools in the Girls' Learning Trust, Link Governors are expected to:

- Meet with the relevant school staff lead (e.g. SENCO, DSL, Careers Leader) once per term.
- Prepare in advance by reading relevant policies, data, and development plan priorities.
- Undertake one focused school visit per term in the assigned area, using the school visit feedback form to support reflection and reporting.
- Submit the completed school visit form in advance of the next LGB meeting.
- Provide a brief verbal or written update to the LGB at each meeting, summarising activities, insights, risks, and recommendations.
- Build professional and respectful relationships with staff, recognising their time constraints and work-life balance.
- Participate in relevant training or personal development to maintain an informed and effective approach to governance.

It is important for Link Governors to maintain an objective, strategic, and evidence-informed approach. Their role is to monitor and assure—not to manage, direct, or intervene operationally. For example, a Link Governor for Safeguarding may review policies and meet the Designated Safeguarding Lead to confirm processes are in place, but would never investigate concerns or advise on specific cases.

Appointment and Expectations

All LGBs must appoint Link Governors for Safeguarding, SEND, and Careers Education in line with statutory guidance. Additional link roles (e.g. Pupil Premium, Health & Safety, Curriculum, Wellbeing) may be introduced based on the school's development priorities and governance capacity.

Link Governors should have the interest, confidence, and where possible, experience relevant to the area of focus.

Reporting to the LGB

At each LGB meeting, Link Governors are expected to:

- Provide a summary of recent activities, insights gained, and assurances or concerns identified.
- Highlight progress against key school development priorities within the link area.
- Raise any issues requiring further discussion, escalation, or action by the LGB or the Trust.

Safeguarding Link Governor

To provide strategic oversight, assurance, and challenge to ensure that safeguarding is embedded across school policy, culture, and practice.

Policy and Compliance:

- Ensure the institution has effective safeguarding policies and procedures that comply with current legislation and best practices.
- Monitor compliance with safeguarding policies, procedures, and statutory requirements.
- Be assured the school has appropriate online filtering and monitoring in place.
- Be assured that Safeguarding is taught effectively.

Training and Awareness:

- Ensure all governors complete appropriate safeguarding training.
- Advocate for a school culture where safeguarding is everyone's responsibility

Support and Supervision:

- Maintain regular contact with the DSL to discuss safeguarding issues and monitor the effectiveness of safeguarding practices.
- Understand the role of the DSL and support them in their duties.
- Ensure appropriate support mechanisms are in place for students and staff affected by safeguarding issues.
- Ensure that the DSL has sufficient time, training, and resources to carry out their responsibilities effectively.
- Support initiatives that promote the well-being and mental health of students.
- Encourage an environment where students feel safe and able to report concerns.

Auditing and Evaluation:

- Conduct annual audit of safeguarding practices and procedures with a focus on reporting and recording.
- Participate in safeguarding audits and self-evaluations to identify strengths and areas for improvement.

Monitoring and Evaluation:

- Ensure that appropriate checks are made on the SCR by the DSL and Headteacher.
- Monitor the implementation of safeguarding policies and practices through regular visits and discussions with school staff.
- Ensure that the school's safeguarding records are maintained accurately and confidentially.

- Review safeguarding incidents and ensure that appropriate actions are taken and recorded.
- Report to the governing body on safeguarding matters, providing updates on policy implementation, training, and any safeguarding issues that have arisen.
- Ensure that any actions identified from audits and inspections are implemented effectively and in a timely manner.

SEND Link Governor

To provide strategic oversight, assurance, and challenge to ensure that SEND provision is inclusive, effective, and compliant with statutory duties.

Policy and Compliance

- Ensure the school has an up-to-date SEND policy aligned with statutory requirements and best practice.
- Review the SEND policy annually and following any legislative or guidance changes.
- Ensure SEND policies and procedures are implemented consistently and understood by staff, governors, and volunteers.
- Ensure the school's SEND records are accurately maintained and stored securely.

Support and Supervision

- Maintain regular contact with the SENCO to review provision, challenges, and improvements.
- Understand the role and responsibilities of the SENCO and support them in their work.
- Ensure the SENCO has sufficient time, training, and resources to fulfil their duties effectively.
- Monitor how well the school supports the well-being and inclusion of students with SEND.
- Promote a culture of high ambition, equity, and support for all learners.

Monitoring and Evaluation

- Monitor the implementation of SEND provision through visits, discussions, and data review.
- Review the progress, attainment, and inclusion of students with SEND, including analysis of interventions and impact.
- Monitor the use of SEND-related funding, including the SEND budget and Pupil Premium allocations, to ensure value for money and targeted impact.
- Ensure students with SEND have full access to the curriculum, with necessary adaptations in place.

Engagement and Reporting

- Promote effective communication and collaboration with the parents and carers of students with SEND.
- Participate in SEND audits, reviews, and self-evaluation activities to identify areas of strength and improvement.
- Ensure that any actions from external inspections or internal reviews are implemented promptly.
- Report to the governing body on SEND provision, policy compliance, training, and student outcomes.

Careers Education and Guidance Link Governor

To provide strategic oversight, assurance, and challenge to ensure that careers education is well-planned, inclusive, and meets statutory expectations and student needs.

Policy and Compliance

- Ensure the school has a clear and current CEIAG (Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance) policy that complies with statutory duties and best practice.
- Review the policy annually or following relevant changes in legislation or DfE guidance.
- Monitor compliance with the Gatsby Benchmarks and the Baker Clause.
- Ensure careers guidance is impartial, accessible, and meets the needs of all students.

Support and Supervision

- Maintain regular contact with the Careers Leader to discuss provision, progress, and priorities.
- Understand the role of the Careers Leader and support them in delivering high-quality CEIAG.
- Ensure the Careers Leader has sufficient time, training, and resources to carry out their responsibilities effectively.
- Encourage parental involvement in careers-related events, options evenings, and employer engagement.

Monitoring and Evaluation

- Monitor the implementation and effectiveness of careers education through visits, student voice, and staff discussions.
- Review participation in and impact of work experience, employer engagement, and careers activities.
- Ensure accurate, confidential record-keeping of careers provision and student participation.
- Monitor the use and impact of funding allocated for careers education, including additional grants.

Engagement and Reporting

- Participate in reviews and self-evaluations of the school's CEIAG programme.
- Ensure any improvement actions identified through audits or inspections are acted on promptly.
- Report to the governing body on policy implementation, programme effectiveness, destination data, and careers-related outcomes.
- Stay up to date with developments in statutory guidance and promote best practice across the school.

Student Attendance Link Governor

To provide strategic oversight, assurance, and informed detailed challenge in relation to student attendance.

Policy and Compliance

- Ensure the school has an up-to-date Attendance Procedure aligned with Trust-wide policy and statutory guidance (e.g. DfE's Working Together to Improve School Attendance).
- Monitor compliance with statutory attendance duties, including accurate registration, escalation procedures, and the use of legal powers (e.g. Fixed Penalty Notices).
- Be assured that procedures for requesting term-time leave and responding to unauthorised absence are clearly communicated and applied fairly.
- Confirm that attendance is reported to parents and carers regularly and transparently, in line with Trust expectations (e.g. sessions missed, not just percentage figures).

Support and Supervision

- Maintain regular contact (at least once per term) with the school's Attendance Champion or senior leader responsible for attendance to:

- Review trends and interventions
- Understand systems in place for monitoring and follow-up
- Discuss resource needs or training
- Support a whole-school approach to attendance, recognising its links with wellbeing, safeguarding, and curriculum engagement.
- Be assured that students with barriers to attendance (e.g. SEND, mental health, socio-economic disadvantage) receive targeted support.

Monitoring and Evaluation

- Review and discuss attendance data including:
 - Overall attendance and persistent absence rates
 - Attendance by key pupil groups (e.g. Pupil Premium, SEND, Year 11)
 - The impact of interventions (e.g. mentoring, attendance panels)
- Monitor the school's use of the DFE Banded Approach or equivalent to tier and track interventions.
- Ensure attendance patterns are considered alongside attainment, behaviour, and wellbeing data to inform priorities.
- Where alternative provision or part-time timetables are used, ensure that processes are documented, reviewed, and meet statutory expectations.

Engagement and Reporting

- Promote effective communication with parents and carers around attendance, including shared expectations, NHS guidance, and support available.
- Participate in attendance audits, self-evaluation activities, or reviews as appropriate.
- Provide termly verbal or written updates to the LGB, summarising emerging attendance trends, risks and mitigating actions.
- Assurance regarding policy compliance and impact of strategies
- Highlight any areas requiring further scrutiny, support, or referral to the Trust level (e.g. policy improvement, training needs, or escalating persistent absence).

17. GOVERNANCE CODE OF CONDUCT

This code sets out the expectations and commitment required from Members, Trustees and members of Local Governing Bodies in order for governance to work effectively across the Trust. This Code should be read in conjunction with the *GLT Articles of Association* and the *GLT Governance Handbook* which contains the scheme of delegation. It should also be read in conjunction with relevant guidance provided by the Department for Education and the Charity Commission for England and Wales:

www.gov.uk/guidance/charity-trustee-whats-involved

www.gov.uk/guidance/-governance-in-academy-trusts

As individuals on the Trust Board and Trust Committees, including the LGBs, we agree to the following:

A. Role and Responsibilities

1. We will abide by the Nolan Principles.
2. We understand the purpose of the Trust Board and Trust Committees and the role of the executive leaders.
3. We will respect the role of the executive and their responsibility for the day-to-day management of the organisation and avoid any actions that might undermine such arrangements.
4. We will actively support and challenge the executive leaders.
5. We accept that we have no legal authority to act individually, except when the Trust Board has given us delegated authority to do so, and therefore we will only speak on behalf of the Trust Board when we have been specifically authorised to do so.
6. We accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the Trust Board or Trust Committees. This means that we will not speak against majority decisions outside the Trust Board or Trust Committee meetings.
7. We have a duty to act fairly and without prejudice, and in so far as we have responsibility for staff, we will fulfil all that is expected of a good employer.
8. We will encourage open governance and will act appropriately.
9. We will consider carefully how our decisions may affect the community and other schools.
10. We will always be mindful of our responsibility to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of the Trust. Our actions within the Trust and the local community will reflect this.
11. In making or responding to criticism or complaints we will follow the GLT Complaints Policy.
12. We will accept and respect the difference in roles between the Trust Board and Trust Committees and staff, ensuring that we work collectively for the benefit of the organisation.
13. We agree to adhere to the Trust/School's rules and policies and the procedures of the Trust Board as set out by the relevant GLT governing documents including the GLT Governance Handbook and the law.
14. When formally speaking or writing in our governing role we will ensure our comments reflect current Trust policy even if they might be different to our personal views.
15. When communicating in our private capacity (including on social media) we will be mindful of and strive to uphold the reputation of the Trust

B. Commitment

16. We acknowledge that accepting office as a Trustee or member of a Trust Committee involves the commitment of significant amounts of time and energy.
17. We will each involve ourselves actively in the work of the Trust Board and Trust Committees, and accept our fair share of responsibilities, including service on working groups, and we will actively participate in all meetings we attend.
18. We will make full efforts to attend all meetings and where we cannot attend explain in advance why we are unable to.

19. We will get to know the Trust and the school(s) we work with well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in school activities.
20. We will visit the school(s) we work with, arranging any visit in advance with the Headteacher and undertaking the visit within the framework established by the LGB in each school.
21. When visiting the school in a personal capacity (eg as a parent or carer), we will maintain our underlying responsibility as a Trustee or member of the Local Governing Body.
22. We will consider seriously our individual and collective needs for induction, training and development, and will undertake relevant training.
23. We accept that in the interests of open governance, our full names, date of appointment, terms of office, roles on the Trust Board or Trust Committees, attendance records, relevant business and pecuniary interests, and category of member of the LGB (if appropriate) will be published on the school and GLT website.
24. In the interests of transparency we accept that information relating to Trustees or members of the Local Governing Body (LGB) will be collected and logged on the Department for Education's national database of governors (known as "Get Information about Schools (GIAS)").

C. Relationships

25. We will strive to work as a team in which constructive working relationships are actively promoted.
26. We will express views openly, courteously and respectfully in all our communications.
27. We will support the Chairs in their role of ensuring appropriate conduct both at Trust Board and Trust Committee meetings at all times.
28. We are prepared to answer queries from other Trustees or members of the LGB in relation to delegated functions and take into account any concerns expressed, and we will acknowledge the time, effort and skills that have been committed to the delegated function by those involved.
29. We will seek to develop effective working relationships with the executive leaders, staff and parents, the local authority, other relevant agencies and the local community.

D. Behaviour at Meetings

30. We will abide by the Terms of Reference for each committee and will not bring issues to the committee that do not fall into that committee's remit as set out in the GLT Scheme of Delegation.
31. We will keep to the agenda set for each meeting and will usually only bring items to the meeting under 'Any other Business' (AOB) that are urgent, preferably with prior agreement by the Chair of that committee.
32. We will read the papers for each meeting in advance in order to be able to provide effective support and challenge to the executive leaders. We will attend all meetings where possible and actively participate in the work of the committee.

E. Confidentiality

33. We will observe complete confidentiality when matters are deemed confidential or where they concern specific members of staff or students, both inside or outside school.
34. We will exercise the greatest prudence at all times when discussions regarding Trust/school business arise outside a Trust Board or a Trust Committee meeting.
35. We will not reveal the details of any Trust Board or a Trust Committee vote.
36. We will ensure all confidential papers are held and disposed of appropriately.
37. We understand that the requirements relating to confidentiality will continue to apply after a Trustee or a member of an LGB leaves office.

F. Conflicts of Interest

38. We will abide by the GLT Conflict of Interest Policy.

39. We will record any pecuniary or other business interest (including those related to people we are connected with) that we have in connection with the Trust's business in the Register of Business Interests, and if any such conflicted matter arises in a meeting we will offer to leave the meeting for the appropriate length of time.
40. We accept that the Register of Business Interests will be published on the Trust/school website.
41. We will declare any actual or potential conflict of interest at the start of any meeting should the situation arise.
42. We will act in the best interests of the Trust as a whole and not as a representative of any group, even if elected to the Trust Board or a Trust Committee.

G. Breaches of this Code of Conduct

43. Trustees and members of an LGB must agree to abide by this Code of Conduct by signing the declaration below at the start of each academic year. This acknowledges that all Trustees and members of an LGB have read and understood this document.
44. Trustees and members of an LGB must follow this Code of Conduct at all times. Failure to do so may lead to their suspension or removal following the process for removal outlined in this document. This applies to all Trustees and members of the LGB irrespective of whether they have been appointed or elected to their position.

H. Nolan Principles of Public Life

Originally published by the Nolan Committee: The Committee on Standards in Public Life was established by the then Prime Minister in October 1994, under the Chairmanship of Lord Nolan, to consider standards of conduct in various areas of public life, and to make recommendations.

- **Selflessness:** holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.
- **Integrity:** holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.
- **Objectivity:** holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.
- **Accountability:** holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.
- **Openness:** holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.
- **Honesty:** holders of public office should be truthful.
- **Leadership:** holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

Process for Removal of a Trustee or member of a Local Governing Body

The process will be compliant with the Articles of the Girls' Learning Trust at all times. The provision for a removal of a Member is set out in the Articles.

The Trustee or member of an LGB being considered for removal is referred to here as the "individual"

A. Grounds for Removal

The removal of an individual should be a last resort. The Trust Board will aim to resolve any situation before it reaches the removal stage, for example through mediation, verbal and written warnings or targeted training. Only when these measures have not succeeded, and the individual continues to act inappropriately, should removal be considered.

The Trust Board may consider removing an individual where:

- There has been a failure to comply with the GLT Code of Conduct.
- There has been serious misconduct. Whether or not an action is classed as serious misconduct should be determined by the Governance Committee based on the facts of the case. It is expected that actions that compromise the Nolan principles would be considered in scope of this.
- They have displayed repeated and serious incompetence.
- They have engaged in conduct aimed at undermining fundamental British values.
- Their actions are significantly detrimental to the effective operation of the Trust Board or Trust Committees (including LGBs), and/or their actions interfere with the operational efficiency of the Trust and/or schools.
- They have not engaged with nor attended meetings for 6 months.

The examples above are not exhaustive.

B. Procedure for Removal

- If it is believed that this code has been breached, or if the conduct of an individual falls below the required standard, this needs to be raised with the Chair of the Trust Board who will investigate.
- If it is the Chair of the Trust Board that is believed to have breached this code, then this needs to be reported to the Vice Chair if the Trust Board or another Trustee, who will then investigate.

If the individual investigating the issue believes there is a case to answer, then the following steps should be taken:

- The proposal to remove must be presented to the GLT Governance, Audit and Risk Committee, who will consider the case and decide whether to proceed to remove the individual.
- A further meeting of the Committee should then be convened within 28 days from the decision to proceed being taken.
- The individual will be given the chance to make a statement in response to the decision to proceed with suspension/removal.

C. Arranging / Conducting the Meeting

- If the decision is taken to proceed with a proposal to remove an individual, then a delegated group of the Trust Governance committee (Removal Committee) will be formed of:
 - For a member of an LGB: at least 3 Trustees
 - For a Trustee: 3 Members of the Trust

- The meeting should be convened no fewer than 28 days from the decision to proceed being taken.
- This meeting will include a “resolution to remove” as an agenda item.
- The Chair of the Trust Board will present a written proposal to the Removal Committee stating the reasons why suspension/removal is proposed.
- The individual will be given the opportunity to present a written or verbal statement at the meeting in response to the decision to proceed with suspension/removal and may attend the meeting if they wish.
- Any papers relating to the removal (for example, any written statement the individual would like to submit) should be included in the papers to be considered at the Removal Committee meeting and sent to committee members 7 days before the meeting.
- The Removal Committee will then decide on whether to remove the individual or take no action. If the decision is made to remove the individual, this will be communicated to the individual in writing explaining the reasons why. This will take place within 7 days of the meeting taking place.
- If the Chair of the Trust Board is the subject of the investigation, then the Vice Chair of the Trust Board will present the case. The Chair of the Trust Board will then not take any part in the Removal Committee meeting other than to present their own case.

D. Appeal Against the Decision

- If the individual wishes to appeal against this decision, then this appeal will be heard by the Appeal Committee, which will consist of:
 - For a member of an LGB: a delegated group of the Trust Board formed of at least 2 Trustees not previously involved in the case and 1 GLT Member who is not a Trustee.
 - For a Trustee: 2 members of the Trust not previously involved in the case, and 1 external individual appointed by the Members on the basis of experience and expertise.
- Any appeal must be made to the Clerk to the GLT Board, in writing, within 14 days of the date of the written communication explaining the decision.
- The meeting to hear the appeal will be convened no less than 14 days from the appeal being made where practicable.
- The individual in question will be given the opportunity to present a written or verbal statement at the meeting in support of the appeal and may attend the meeting if they wish.
- The Appeal Committee will consider any appeal and respond in writing within 7 days of the meeting.
- The Appeal Committee decision is final.

18. RECRUITMENT AND INDUCTION PROTOCOL

This protocol sets out the key steps to ensure that new Trustees or members of the Local Governing Bodies are recruited fairly, and can carry out an induction process to ensure they can be effective in their new role.

Recruitment

There are four key stages that should guide the recruitment process (other than when an election is required):

1. Needs Assessment and Role Definition

- Conduct a Skills Audit: evaluate the current skills, knowledge, and diversity of the Board or Committee.
- Identify Gaps: determine additional skills and experiences needed.
- Develop Role Descriptions: create detailed descriptions outlining responsibilities, expectations, and qualifications.
- Define Person Specifications: specify the personal attributes, skills, and experiences desired in candidates.

2. Outreach and Application

- Advertise the Role: promote the role widely through relevant channels, ensuring diverse and inclusive outreach.
- Prepare Application Pack: include the role description, person specification, and key information about the Trust.
- Provide Application Forms: use a structured online form to standardise candidate information.

3. Selection and Appointment

- Establish a Panel: define who is part of the selection process and agree a clear timetable.
- Shortlist Candidates: review applications against the role criteria.
- Conduct Interviews: perform structured interviews to assess candidate suitability and ensure fairness in the process.
- Check References: conduct thorough reference and background checks as required by relevant legislation.
- Seek Approval: present the final candidates to the relevant Board or Committee for approval with a formal paper.

Induction

Welcome Meeting	
Topics covered in this meeting should include: ▪ Trust Structure ▪ GLT Governance Handbook ▪ GLT Code of Conduct (read and sign) ▪ Financial position of the Trust ▪ Trust/School priorities ▪ Role and commitment of Trustee / Governor ▪ Buddy system ▪ Skills audit ▪ Business interests ▪ Governor Hub	As soon as possible after appointment or election and before attending any Trust/LGB meetings For Trustees, the meeting will be held with the Chair and /or Vice Chair of the Board and the CEO For members of the LGB, the meeting will be held with the CEO, Chair of the LGB and the Headteacher

Visit to School / Schools	
Topics covered in this meeting should include: ▪ Meeting with Exec/Leadership teams ▪ Tour of school hosted by students	As soon as possible after appointment or election New Trustees will be expected to visit all schools in the Trust
Buddy System	
All new Trustees / Governors will be allocated a 'buddy' for an initial period of 6 months. The role of the buddy is to: ▪ Meet the new Trustee / Governor prior to their first meeting to explain the papers/procedures ▪ To provide further support as needed ▪ Talk through the expectations of a Trustee / Governor at meetings, e.g. critical friend ▪ To answer questions as required.	As soon as possible after appointment or election
Review Meeting	
To be held sixth and twelve months after appointment. The meeting will review the induction process and agree any further training needs.	For Trustees, the meeting will be held with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Board and the CEO For members of the LGB, the meeting will be held with the CEO, Chair of the LGB and the Headteacher

19.GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Acronym / Term	Definition and Application in GLT Context
Accounting Officer	The CEO serves as the Trust's Accounting Officer, accountable to Parliament and the DfE for financial propriety, regularity, and value for money.
Admissions Code	Statutory DfE guidance that all admissions policies must follow; overseen by the Trust Admissions Committee.
Articles of Association	The legal document that outlines the governance structure and powers of the Trust. All governance operates within these Articles.
Board Assurance	The process of ensuring the Trust Board receives sufficient, timely, and accurate information to make informed strategic decisions.
Chair's Action	Provision allowing the Chair of a committee or Board to approve urgent matters between meetings, subject to reporting back at the next meeting.
Clerk to Trust Board	A governance professional who supports the administration, compliance, and documentation of meetings across the Trust's Board and committees.
Code of Conduct	A document setting out expected standards of behaviour and commitment from all Trustees and Governors.
Conflict of Interest	A situation in which an individual's personal interests could improperly influence their decision-making in their governance role.
Coopted Trustee	A Trustee appointed by the Board rather than the Members. Used to fill skills gaps or increase capacity.
Curriculum Intent	The strategic purpose behind a school's curriculum, monitored by LGBs to ensure alignment with the Trust's education mission.
Delegation of Authority	The formal process by which authority is passed from the Trust Board to committees, executive staff, or schools (set out in the Scheme of Delegation).
DfE	Department for Education – the government department responsible for funding, policy, and oversight of education in England.
ELT	Executive Leadership Team – The group of senior Trust executives responsible for implementing the strategy and overseeing operations.
Exclusion Committee	A subcommittee convened to review the legality and appropriateness of a suspension or permanent exclusion.
External Auditor	Independent financial auditor appointed to review the Trust's statutory accounts in accordance with SORP and the Academy Trust Handbook.
Funding Agreement	A legal contract between the Trust and the Secretary of State, which outlines the conditions under which public funding is received.
Gatsby Benchmarks	A framework of 8 standards used to assess the quality of careers education. LGBs monitor compliance with these in schools.
GIAS	Get Information About Schools – National register of school and governance details.
GovernorHub	A cloud-based system used across GLT for governance administration, meeting papers, records, and compliance.
INSET	In-Service Education and Training – Professional development days for school staff, often aligned with CPD priorities.
Internal Scrutiny Partner	A body or individual appointed to conduct independent internal audits and reviews to strengthen assurance and compliance.

JCQ	Joint Council for Qualifications – The exam regulation body. GLT schools must follow JCQ guidelines for assessments and invigilation.
Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)	Statutory safeguarding guidance which all GLT Trustees, Governors, and staff must read and comply with annually.
KPI	Key Performance Indicator – A data point used to assess performance against Trust and school-level objectives.
LAC	Looked After Children – Students who are in the care of the local authority.
LGB	Local Governing Body – A subcommittee of the Trust Board with delegated responsibility for school-level standards and safeguarding.
Link Governor	A governor with a specialist remit, such as safeguarding, SEND, or careers. Required for all LGBs to meet statutory expectations.
MAT	Multi-Academy Trust – A legal structure in which multiple academies are governed under one Trust Board.
Members	The guardians of the Trust’s governance structure. They appoint Trustees and ensure compliance with the Articles of Association.
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education – The inspectorate responsible for school and Trust inspections. Outcomes inform strategic priorities.
Parent Governor	An elected governor on each LGB, drawn from the parent body of the school. Each LGB must include at least two.
Pupil Premium (PP)	Government funding allocated to support the attainment of disadvantaged students.
Quorum	The minimum number of committee or Board members required to make formal decisions. Defined in the Articles and Terms of Reference.
RSHE	Relationships, Sex and Health Education – A mandatory part of the curriculum monitored by LGBs.
Safeguarding Link Governor	A governor responsible for maintaining oversight of safeguarding procedures and training, and liaising with the DSL.
SCR	Single Central Record – The statutory register of all vetting and safeguarding checks on staff and volunteers. Reviewed by DSLs and LGBs.
SEF	Self-Evaluation Form – Used by each school to reflect on strengths and areas for improvement. Informs the SDP and Trust assurance processes.
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities – Refers to students requiring tailored support or provision. LGBs must monitor provision and outcomes.
Staff Governor	An elected governor drawn from the school’s staff. Typically sits on the LGB to contribute professional insight.
Statutory Guidance	Government-issued expectations that schools and Trusts must follow unless they can demonstrate clear reason for non-compliance.
Virtual School Head (VSH)	Local authority representative responsible for the education of looked-after children. Must be consulted during exclusions or safeguarding cases.
Whistleblowing	The policy and process for raising concerns about malpractice, wrongdoing, or safeguarding failures. Trustees and staff are trained annually.