



Local Governing Body  
Governance Guidelines



# Local Governing Body Governance Guidelines

## Overview

This document provides guidelines for the governance of schools within Equals Trust. It is expected that all Local Governing Bodies (LGBs) will adhere to the guidelines in order to ensure that consistent governance principles and practice are applied across the whole Trust.

These guidelines are compliant with and should be read alongside the LGB Terms of Reference, the Trust Scheme of Delegation and the Trust Governance Structure documents.

## Structure of LGBs

LGBs will comprise of the Headteacher of the school plus governors within the following categories:

Parent Governors – who will be appointed following election by parents and carers of pupils at the school.

Staff Governors – who will be appointed following election by staff at the school.

Trust Governors – who will be appointed by the Trust Board.

The normal term of office for Parent, Staff and Trust Governors will be four years.

It should be noted that the number of Trust Governors should be equal to the combined number of Parent and Staff Governors (including the Headteacher).

LGBs may, if they wish, also appoint Associate Governors who can support in the work of the Governing Body but who do not have voting rights at LGB meetings.

LGBs should annually appoint a Chair and Vice-Chair in accordance with the timetable established by the Trust Administration and Governance Manager (TAGM).

## LGB Meetings

The full LGB will meet twice each term and Equals Trust will provide a comprehensive clerking service for those meetings.

A draft agenda will be provided by the TAGM itemising standard Trust-wide agenda items. The LGB Chair or Headteacher can add additional agenda items by contacting the TAGM prior to the meeting papers being issued. All meeting papers will be circulated to attendees at least one week prior to each meeting.

All LGB decisions will be made at the main meetings and powers will not be further delegated to sub-committees.

The detailed scrutiny and challenge necessary for the LGB to fulfil its responsibilities for delivering sound and effective governance will be undertaken by Link Governors and Groups – see section below. These Governors will provide regular exception reporting on their areas of focus and allow all Governors to focus on the key issues. They will also each complete an annual governance checklist which should be considered at the LGB before approval and submission to the TAGM, in accordance with the Equals Trust Annual Checklist Timetable.

## **Link Groups and Governors**

The work of the LGB will be supported by the annual appointment of two Groups with responsibility for:

Performance Management                  School Development

And Link Governors with responsibility for:

Curriculum                                  LGB Development                          Pupil Groups

Pupil Progress                              Child Protection                          Building & Equipment

Documentation                              Lifestyle Choices

Equals Trust will provide and maintain individual Guideline documents which outline the responsibilities of these Link Groups and Governors. In addition, a central information point will provide useful documents and links within the on-line Trust Governor Library.

The Link Groups and Governors will undertake the detailed scrutiny of their individual areas of responsibility within the school by regular meetings with the Headteacher and/or other relevant members of the school staff. They should receive all necessary information and will be given an open opportunity to question and challenge where they consider appropriate.

Governors should ensure that summary reports of meetings and supporting evidence of detailed scrutiny are filed on-line. This information will be readily accessible to other Governors who wish to understand the detail ahead of receiving any exception reports to the LGB or are interested in historical information to help guide future governor visits. It will also form clear, accessible evidence of good governance whenever the school is inspected.

Reports to the LGB should be made at least annually and should be on an exception basis, highlighting areas of concern or of significant success. Where areas of concern are identified, action plans should have been agreed and a reporting timetable established. An annual checklist should also be completed and presented to the LGB in line with the Equals Trust Annual Checklist Timetable.

## **Role of a Governor**

The responsibilities of LGBs and the role of individual Governors has changed markedly over recent years, with a far greater level of responsibility for monitoring activity within the school and for driving and overseeing sustained improvement in standards of education. This entails a level of commitment to the role of Governors commensurate with those responsibilities and LGBs should ensure that all existing and prospective Governors understand the role and how they will be required to contribute. In return Governors should gain greater personal satisfaction in directly fulfilling a role in ensuring excellent standards of education are provided to all pupils at their school.

It is expected that Governors will attend all LGB meetings and take ownership of at least one area of Link responsibility. The link responsibility is likely to entail at least one meeting/visit to the school each term and a minimum of one formal report to the LGB each year.

Detailed person and job specifications are attached as an appendix to this document and should be made available to all existing and new Governors.

### **Trust Support for LGBs**

TAGM – will provide a full clerking service. Will ensure that meetings are directly supported on the day and are fully minuted. Will provide a contact point for all governance queries. Will maintain a Trust Governors Library with up to date and appropriate documentation of relevance and interest to Governors. Will collate the return of all LGB checklists and provide a summary of findings for consideration by the Trust CEO and Trust Board.

Trust Finance Manager (TFM) – will undertake all necessary financial monitoring of the school’s budget and spending levels and ensure that the requirements of the Trust Financial Procedures are being fully complied with. Where the TFM identifies issues of relevance to the LGB he/she will report to the LGB on an exception basis. The TFM will ensure that the Trust provides adequate financial reporting to allow the LGB to understand the school’s financial position and ensure that the reporting is timely and accurate. The TFM will arrange for annual audits to be undertaken and will ensure that appropriate actions are in place and monitored, should any deficiencies be identified. LGBs will be provided with details of audit findings and actions being undertaken. The TFM will provide support for the annual budget setting process, ensuring that the LGB has short and medium term forecasts of income levels and implications for school expenditure.

### **Other Relevant Documents**

This document should be considered alongside other documents relevant to governance within Equals Trust which include:

Equals Trust Local Governing Body Terms of Reference

Equals Trust Scheme of Delegation

Equals Trust Governance Structure

Individual Link Governor guideline documents

Annual Governor Checklist Timetable

Equals Trust School Policy Review Schedule

All the above documents are available within the Trust Governor Library.

### **Document History and Review**

This document was formally approved at the Trust Board meeting of 24 May 2017.

It is due for review in the Summer term of 2018.

## Appendix – Governor Job and Person Specification