



A Vision for Excellence

Governors' Handbook

November 2021

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Introduction

Vision and Values

Plymouth CAST is a Multi-Academy Trust of Catholic schools, which is part of the mission of the Catholic Church dedicated to human flourishing and the building of a kingdom of peace, truth, and justice. The Trust is to be conducted in all aspects in accordance with Canon law and the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church and at all times to serve as a witness to the Catholic faith in Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Our vision and values are derived from our identity as a Catholic Trust. Central to our vision is the dignity of the human person, especially the most vulnerable. Our academies are dedicated to providing an education and formation, where all our pupils and young people flourish in a safe, nurturing, enriching environment. All Governors in our academies are expected to be familiar with the vision, mission, values, and principles of the Trust and not in any way to undermine them. They should support and promote the vision and principles of the Trust and conduct themselves at all times in school and on school business according to this vision.

Working together

Plymouth CAST and the Plymouth Diocesan Education Service (DES)

In addition to the Scheme of Delegated Authority and the Schedule of Accountability, to guide the work of LGBs, the Trust will also provide a series of training sessions throughout the academic year. The Diocese will provide training and support for Foundation Governors and Foundation Directors to ensure that they are able to act in accordance with the best principles of Catholic governance in education.

The Bishop has the legal right to appoint, and remove, Foundation Directors and Governors if they fail to ensure:

- That the Catholic character of the school is preserved;
- That the school is conducted in accordance with its trust deed;
- That the religious education curriculum is in accordance with the Bishop's policy for his diocese; based on the Bishops' Conference Curriculum Directory.

The accountability for the performance of the MAT in terms of staff appointments, educational performance, performance management of staff, safeguarding, health and safety and overseeing the financial performance lies with the Board of the Trust, delegated to the CEO and the Senior Executive Leadership Team.

Governance Responsibilities across the Trust

The approach taken by Plymouth CAST, in line with other larger school trusts, is that most responsibility is delegated from the Board of Directors to the Senior Executive Leadership Team. This model leaves the Local Governing Board (LGB) free to concentrate on areas as identified in the seven 'Key Roles' detailed in the Schedule of Accountability. Governance responsibilities are shared on three layers:

1. Responsibilities of the Members:

- Guardians of the governance of the Multi-Academy Trust;

- Accountable to the Bishop (unless the Member is the Bishop);
- Signatories to the Memorandum and Articles of Association;
- Akin to shareholders.

2. Responsibilities of the Directors:

- Trust Directors and Charity Trustees;
- Accountable to the Members and the Bishop;
- Duty to uphold the Multi-Academy Trust's objects and to comply with any directives, advice and/or guidance issued by the Bishop;
- Responsible for preserving and developing the Multi-Academy Trust's Catholic character at all times, and this overriding duty (which is also a legal duty) should permeate everything that the Directors do;
- Responsible for the general control and management of the administration of the Multi-Academy Trust and for delivering the three core functions;
- Responsible for standards of education in the academies within the Multi-Academy Trust;
- Delegate functions to sub-committees, Senior Executive Leadership Team, LGBs, and Headteachers;
- Appoint the Senior Executive Leadership Team.

3. Responsibilities of the LGB Governors:

- Appointed/elected to be a Governor of a specific school or schools within the Multi-Academy Trust in accordance with the Scheme of Delegated Authority (SoDA);
- Have oversight of one (or more) schools in the Multi-Academy Trust and are accountable to the Board of Directors of the Multi-Academy Trust for their conduct as Governors and their support of the Catholic character of their school and the Trust;
- Vital link to the local community;
- Are sub-committees of the Board of Directors and have an important role in supporting the Board of Directors with the delivery of the strategic aims of the Trust, in line with both the Trust Improvement Plan (TIP) and the School Improvement Plan (SIP) as outlined in the Schedule of Accountability.

Management Responsibilities - Senior Executive Team and Headteachers

Management responsibilities are shared on two levels:

1. Senior Executive Leadership Team:

- Appointed by the Board of Directors and employed by the Multi-Academy Trust;
- Expectation that this must include a CEO (to act as Accounting Officer) and a CFO, in line with the School Trust Handbook 2021 (also known as the Academies Financial Handbook 2021);
- Responsible for 'operations' and for delivering the Board's vision and ethos – the 'professional leaders';
- Responsible for the Multi-Academy Trust's financial effectiveness and stability and for ensuring value for money;
- Responsible for the performance management of the Headteachers with the support of the Local Governing Board.

2. Headteachers:

- Responsible for day-to-day management of the school (or schools with an Executive Head);
- Responsible for performance management of staff, excluding those staff whose performance is managed by the Directors, a committee of the Directors or the senior executive leadership;
- Responsible for standards in their school/schools;
- Full description of the Headteacher's responsibilities can be found in the revised Job Descriptions (Sept 2018);
- To conduct work and performance in line with the National Professional Standards for Headteachers.

Local Governing Boards - the role

The revised Scheme of Delegated Authority (Nov 2021) is 'sheer and clear'. There is a direct line of accountability from the Headteacher, to the Education and Standards Manager, to the Director of Education and Standards (for educational performance) and to the Chief Finance Officer and Chief Operations Officer (for financial and operational performance) to the Chief Executive Officer, to the Board.

The role of the Local Governing Board may be summed up as:

- To support and promote the vision, values and principles of Plymouth CAST as a committee of the Board and a non-statutory body;
- To act as a 'wisdom group' for the school, to support and encourage the Catholic life and mission of the school;
- To act as champions and advocates in the local community for their school;
- To support and challenge the Headteacher in fulfilling their responsibilities;
- To have oversight and develop knowledge in key areas: RE and Catholic Life; Curriculum and Standards; Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and Inclusion, including Education Healthcare Plan funding for children with additional needs (EHCP); Safeguarding and Child Protection; Health and Safety; the Impact of Statutory Grant funding (including Pupil Premium, PE and Sports Premium, Catch-up Grants) and Parents and the Community;
- To support and challenge the Headteacher in the implementation of the School Improvement Plan;
- To forge relationships between the school and the local community, especially parents and carers and the local Parish;
- To support CAST strategic priorities and to contribute expertise and knowledge to the development of Governor capacity across CAST;
- To be accountable to the Board and, in the case of Foundation Governors, to the Bishop, for their conduct as Governors.

The expectations of Governors are outlined in the Code of Conduct for Governors. The Clerk has access to the current Code of Conduct. All Directors and Governors are expected to adhere to the Nolan Principles. See Appendix 1. Foundation Governors should be mindful of the information and guidance regarding the role, appointment and reappointment of Foundation Governors from Plymouth Diocese.

Constitution of the Local Governing Board

The constitution of a Local Governing Board (LGB) in Plymouth CAST is set out in the Scheme of Delegated Authority. Below is a summary of the main points from the Scheme.

The members of the Local Governing Board shall be known as Governors, with not less than four on an LGB. The constitution and delegated powers of the LGB are in accordance with Appendix 1 of the Scheme of Delegated Authority.

Foundation Governors on the LGB will be those appointed by the Bishop. They shall “outnumber all the other members by two so as to ensure the preservation and development of the Catholic character of the School.” The Chair must be elected annually by a simple majority of the LGB. Only Foundation Governors may be considered for the post.

Chair and Vice Chair of the LGB

Each school year at their first meeting, the LGB should elect a Chair and a Vice Chair from amongst the Foundation Governors.

The Chair or Vice-Chair may at any time resign his/her office by giving notice in writing to the Local Governing Board.

The Chair or Vice-Chair shall cease to hold office if he/she:

- Ceases to serve on the Local Governing Board;
- Is employed by the Multi-Academy Trust Company whether or not at the School;
- Is removed from office in accordance with this Scheme of Delegated Authority; or in the case of the Vice-Chair, is elected in accordance with this Scheme of Delegated Authority to fill a vacancy in the office of Chair.

If a vacancy arises in the office of Chair or Vice-Chair, the members of the Local Governing Board shall at its next meeting elect one of their number to fill that vacancy.

Where the Chair is absent from any meeting or there is at the time a vacancy in the office of the Chair, the Vice-Chair or his/her nominee shall act as the Chair for the purposes of the meeting.

The Clerk shall act as Chair during that part of any meeting at which the Chair is elected.

Any election of the Chair or Vice-Chair which is contested shall be held by secret ballot.

Removal of Chair or Vice-Chair

The Chair or Vice-Chair may only be removed from office by the Directors at any time or by the Local Governing Board in accordance with this Scheme of Delegated Authority.

A resolution to remove the Chair or Vice-Chair from office which is passed at a meeting of the Local Governing Board shall not have effect unless:

It is confirmed by a resolution passed at a second meeting of the Local Governing Board held not less than fourteen days after the first meeting; and the matter of the Chair or Vice-Chair’s removal from office is

specified as an item of business on the agenda for each of those meetings; and copies of the resolutions are served on the Directors.

Before a resolution is passed by the Local Governing Board at the relevant meeting as to whether to confirm the previous resolution to remove the Chair or Vice-Chair from office, the person or persons proposing his/her removal shall at that meeting state their reasons for doing so and the Chair or Vice-Chair shall be given an opportunity to make a statement in response.

Clerk - the role in organising and minuting meetings

The LGB under powers delegated by the Directors, may appoint a Clerk (who must not be the Headteacher) to provide clerking services to the Local Governing Board and may remove the Clerk from office at any time.

In the absence of the Clerk from an LGB meeting, the Local Governing Board may appoint any one of its members to act as Clerk for the purposes of that meeting.

The Clerk must:

- Convene meetings of the Local Governing Board;
- Attend meetings of the Local Governing Board;
- Advise the Local Governing Board on the School's compliance with the Articles, the funding agreement, the Scheme of Delegated Authority and ensure that all communications from CAST regarding updates on the law are passed on to the LGB;
- Ensure that minutes of the proceedings are drawn up;
- Perform any other functions determined by the Local Governing Board.

The Clerk shall provide to each member of the Local Governing Board at least seven full days before the date of a meeting:

- Notice in writing or by email sent to each member of the Local Governing Board using contact details provided;
- All reports or other papers to be considered at the meeting;
- A copy of the agenda for the meetings.

All LGB business shall be conducted in the annual cycle of full LGB meetings. Governors may, however, convene from time-to-time specific working parties or 'task and finish' groups with terms of reference agreed by the LGB.

The convening of a meeting and the proceedings conducted thereat shall not be invalidated by reason of any individual not having received written notice of the meeting or a copy of the agenda thereof.

A resolution to rescind or vary a resolution carried at a previous meeting of the Local Governing Board shall not be proposed at a meeting of the Local Governing Board unless the consideration of the rescission or variation of the previous resolution is a specific item of business on the agenda for that meeting.

The minutes shall include a record of:

All appointments of officers made by the Local Governing Board; and all proceedings at meetings of the Local Governing Board and of committees of the Local Governing Board including the names of all persons present at each such meeting.

The Clerk shall ensure that copies of minutes of all meetings of the Local Governing Board shall be provided to the Directors (and the Bishop and the Diocesan Trustees as requested) as soon as reasonably practicable after those minutes are approved.

The quorum for a meeting of the Local Governing Board, is three of the members of the Local Governing Board, with a majority of Foundation Governors, or, where greater, any one third (rounded up to a whole number) of the total number of persons holding office on the Local Governing Board at the date of the meeting, with a majority of Foundation Governors.

The Local Governing Board may act notwithstanding any vacancies on its Board, but, if the numbers of persons serving is less than the number fixed as the quorum, the continuing persons may act only for the purpose of filling vacancies or of calling a general meeting.

Subject to this Scheme of Delegated Authority, every question to be decided at a meeting of the Local Governing Board shall be determined by a majority of the votes of the persons present and entitled to vote on the question. Every member of the Local Governing Board shall have one vote.

Any member of the Local Governing Board shall be able to participate in meetings of the Local Governing Board by telephone or video conference provided that:

He/she has given notice of his/her intention to do so detailing the telephone number on which he/she can be reached and/or appropriate details of the video conference suite from which he/she shall be taking part at the time of the meeting at least 48 hours before the meeting.

Appointing Governors

The Plymouth CAST Induction Policy describes the steps that should be taken to ensure that every new Governor has a good introduction to the LGB. The Clerk has access to the forms, which are listed on Induction Policy: Forms CG1 for Foundation Governors, Form CG2 for Parent, Community, Staff and Co-opted Governors. All governors are required to complete a skills audit, Form CG3.

In carrying out the appointment of new Governors all Clerks should follow the Induction Policy.

Parent Governors

The parent members of the LGB shall be appointed by the Local Governing Board from amongst the parents of pupils registered at the school.

The Local Governing Board shall make all necessary arrangements for the election of the parent members of the Local Governing Board, including any question as to whether a person is a parent of a registered pupil at the school. Any election of persons who are to be parent members of the Local Governing Board which is contested shall be held by secret ballot.

The arrangements made for the election of the parent members of the Local Governing Board shall provide for every person who is entitled to vote in the election to have an opportunity to do so by post or if he/she prefers by having his/her ballot paper returned to the school by a registered pupil at the school.

Where a vacancy for a parent member of the Local Governing Board is required to be filled by election, the Local Governing Board shall take such steps as are reasonably practical to secure that every person who is known to them to be a parent of a registered pupil at the school is informed of the vacancy.

The number of parent members of the Local Governing Board required shall be made up by persons appointed by the Local Governing Board if the number of parents standing for election is less than the number of vacancies.

Staff Governors

Unless the Headteacher resigns from the Local Governing Board, he/she shall be treated for all purposes as being an ex officio member of the Local Governing Board.

The Local Governing Board may appoint persons who are employed at the school to serve on the Local Governing Board, provided that the total number of such persons (including the Headteacher) complies with the Local Governing Board's constitution in force at the time.

The Local Governing Board shall invite nominations from all staff who are employed by the Multi-Academy Trust and who work at the school (excluding the Headteacher) and, where the post is contested, shall hold an election by a secret ballot. All arrangements for the calling and the conduct of the election and resolution of questions as to whether any person is an eligible candidate shall be determined by the Directors.

Community Governors

The Local Governing Board may appoint persons who live in the parish or wider community that the school serves as members of the Local Governing Board, provided that the ratio of Foundation Governors to all other types is maintained.

Co-opted Governors

The Local Governing Board may appoint Co-opted Governors where there is the need to support a specific area or for specific skills. These appointments must be made to ensure the ratio of Foundation Governors to all other types is maintained. Co-opted Governors may serve the same term as all other Governors.

Associate Governors

The Local Governing Board may secure support from an Associate for a specified time to provide experience for a particular project or area. This Associate will not have voting rights and will remain in post only whilst there is the need. The Local Governing Board should seek advice from the Directors if the need for the timeframe of this appointment extends.

Governors' Code of Conduct

The Code of Conduct should be discussed at the first meeting of the LGB each year and signed by each Governor.

If a Governor breaches the Code an investigation will be carried out. This may result in suspension or removal from the LGB.

Terms of Office

The term of office for any person, other than a Foundation Governor, serving on the Local Governing Board shall be 4 years, to be specified at the time of appointment by the person or Board appointing them, save that this time limit shall not apply to the Headteacher. Subject to remaining eligible to be a particular type of member on the Local Governing Board, any person may be re-appointed or re-elected to the Local Governing Board, save that Foundation Governors may only serve a maximum of three consecutive four-year terms (other than with the consent of the Bishop).

Lead Governors

The role of the Lead Governors is not to be responsible or accountable to the Board for the outcomes in the specific areas. It is to be the Governor 'specialist' in that area who can support and challenge the Headteacher. It is a way of building capacity in the school community. The Headteacher is the lead professional and is accountable to their ESM and ultimately to the Board for outcomes in all areas. The Headteacher will benefit from the support and challenge of committed and informed Lead Governors who have developed knowledge and interest in one of the areas. The Lead Governor may not have a professional background in the area, but the assumption is that they will commit to informing themselves about the area and, where possible, undertaking training. The expectations of the Lead Governor may be summarised as follows:

- To be the lay 'specialist' in that area to support and challenge the Headteacher
- To lead on the questions at LGB meetings when that area is being discussed
- To proactively support the Headteacher and the school in their area through visits and support with monitoring e.g. Health and Safety inspections, Safeguarding audits
- To reach out to agencies and local groups who might help in the area e.g. local authority training, links with the local parish and diocese
- To meet the school lead in these areas for briefings and updates. The frequency of any meetings can be determined locally.

1 RE and Catholic Life

The Scheme of Delegated Authority requires the LGB to appoint a Lead Governor for RE and Catholic Life. Part of this role involves Local Governing Boards in supporting Headteachers to ensure that the curriculum of the school is taught in the light of Gospel Values and that RE is in accordance with the RE Curriculum Directory and that 10% of the weekly timetable at KS1 and KS2 (or 5% for KS3 and 4) is given to RE. LGBs will also support the observance of a daily act of Collective Worship and that RSE (Relationships and Sex Education) is taught in accordance with the social and moral teaching of the Church. There is cross-over between the RE and Catholic Life Lead and the Curriculum and Standards Lead. This role should be carried out by a Foundation Governor.

2 Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, Inclusion and Equality

Local Governing Boards are asked to appoint a Lead Governor with oversight of SEND and to assist the Headteacher and Senior Executive Leadership Team to ensure that the SEND Policy is implemented in full and that the progress of pupils with SEND is effectively tracked and intervention is arranged where needed. Provision for children with an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP), which attracts additional funding should also be monitored.

The Lead Governor for Special Educational Needs, Inclusion and Equality will take responsibility for liaising with the Headteacher, or senior member of staff, to monitor the behaviour of children and to ensure that the school's implementation of the Behaviour Policy is effective. Anonymised data from CPOMS should be used to support the monitoring of behavioural incidents, patterns, and trends over time.

3 Safeguarding

Local Governing Boards are asked to appoint a Lead Governor with oversight of Safeguarding. This Governor will support the Headteacher and Senior Executive Leadership in ensuring that the Trust's Safeguarding policies and procedures are implemented. The Safeguarding Lead Governor has a key role to play in supporting any safeguarding audits, ensuring that any safeguarding requests from the Trust are returned on time, supporting the Headteacher to ensure that the Single Central Record is maintained properly and kept up to date. This will need to be monitored on a half termly basis. The Lead Governor should regularly carry out learning walks around the school and talk with both staff and children to 'test' the culture of safeguarding in the school.

4 Statutory Grants (Pupil Premium, PE and Sport Premium, Year 7 Catch-Up Premium)

Local Governing Boards are asked to appoint a Lead Governor to monitor the impact of Statutory Grants, Pupil Premium, PE and Sports Funding and Catch-up Funding.

5 Health and Safety

A Lead Governor for Health and Safety will need to be appointed and will be required to undertake site walks with the Headteacher on a half termly basis to ensure that the site is safe and well maintained for pupils, visitors, and staff. The Lead Governor will also be required to monitor that statutory checks and testing are done in relation to Legionella, fire call points and fire drills. This Governor will also need to support and challenge the Headteacher in all school developed risk assessments and check that risk assessments are uploaded onto the EVOLVE H&S system. The H&S Lead will also be responsible for monitoring any near-miss incidents and accidents in the school and to check that these have been recorded on OSHENS where RIDDOR is reportable.

Local Governing Boards, with their range of expertise and experience, are well placed to support and challenge the Headteacher to review the risk register and ensure that contingency planning is in place. This is included in the Health and Safety Lead Governors role in the Schedule of Accountability.

6 Curriculum and Standards

The Scheme of Delegated Authority requires the LGB to appoint a Lead Governor for Curriculum and Standards. Part of this role involves Local Governing Boards in supporting Headteachers to ensure that the curriculum of the school is taught in the light of Gospel Values and that RE is in accordance

with the RE Curriculum Directory and that 10% of the weekly timetable at KS1 and KS2 (or 5% for KS3 and 4) is given to RE. LGBs will also support the observance of a daily act of Collective Worship and that RSE (Relationships and Sex Education) is taught in accordance with the social and moral teaching of the Church. The LGB is asked to appoint a Lead Governor for RE and Catholic Life. There is cross-over between the Lead for Education and Standards and the RE and Catholic Life Lead. It will also include monitoring the School Improvement Plan, Early Years, and the progress the school is making in developing the curriculum.

7 Parents and the Community

The Lead Governor for Parents and the Community is focused on:

- Communication with parents, the parish and the local community;
- Reviewing pupil recruitment;
- Developing a marketing strategy for the school;
- Undertaking other community related tasks.

8 The Chair of Governors is the Leader of the Board

The Chair is required to organise the LGB. The Scheme of Delegated Authority includes more clarity of definition of the role of the LGB to ‘support and challenge the Headteacher’, to support the Directors in carrying out their three core functions and to appoint ‘lead’ Governors in the key areas of RE and Catholic Life, SEND, Safeguarding and Child Protection, The Impact of Statutory Grants, Health and Safety, Curriculum and Standards, and Parents and the Community.

Documentation to Support Governors

Every effort is made to support Governors to do the best possible job for our children. Key documentation includes:

1. Code of Conduct
2. The Schedule of Accountability and associated A4 record sheets - these documents give clear guidance on how Governors can carry out their role effectively
3. Checklists to Support Governance - these provides examples of questions Governors can ask and gives guidance on what Governors should be looking for when carrying out their role
4. Governors’ Handbook
5. School Visits Policy
6. Induction Policy - guides the process of appointing and introducing new Governors to the LGB
7. Annual Review forms for the Chair of the LGB
8. Annual Review form for Governors
9. Annual Self-Evaluation of the Local Governing Board, RE and Catholic Life of the School which assists the school in reviewing RE and Catholic Life.
10. CES Skills Audit
11. Governing News which comes out termly and notifies Governors of training opportunities and provides general updates on the Trust.

Other Operational Guidance

The Scheme of Delegated Authority (SoDA) covers the delegated role of Local Governing Boards in the following areas:

Finance

This section clarifies the role of the LGB as that of 'supporting the Headteacher in the preparation of the annual budget'. The LGB does not set or approve the annual budget. There is no provision in the SoDA for an individual Governor with oversight of finances. It is expected that all Governors will be able to support and challenge the Headteacher in achieving value for money and in setting a balanced budget. Local Governors, with their knowledge of the local community and often of local and national business, can play an invaluable role in creating links with local businesses and sourcing opportunities for additional income.

Contracts

The LGB and individual Governors are not in a legal position to issue any contracts on behalf of their school. They are, however, well placed to support and challenge the Headteacher in ensuring that value for money is achieved and all school business is carried out ethically and in line with the Nolan Principles for Public Life and with the Framework for Ethical Leadership in Education. They may also support the Directors in their monitoring of the delivery of any central services and support the Headteacher in ensuring good value from any service level agreements.

Admissions

The Board of Plymouth CAST is the admission authority; hence the role of the Local Governing Board is to support the consultation and publication of admissions arrangements. Local Governing Boards, with their commitment to the school and local knowledge, have a key role to play in supporting pupil recruitment to the school.

Complaints

Local Governing Boards are asked to play a role in hearing complaints at the relevant stage. See the Plymouth CAST Complaints Policy.

Staffing

The Local Governing Board is not the employer and is not able to make staff appointments or dismiss or discipline staff. The Directors, when appointing senior staff, will wish to ensure that Governors are properly consulted. The Directors, as employers, have delegated the performance management of the Headteacher to the Senior Executive Leadership Team. Local Governors will be invited to take part in the process to advise and support. Likewise, in the case of any major reviews of staffing structures or senior job descriptions, the Local Governing Board should be involved to advise and support. As a non-statutory body, it is not the role of the LGB to convene panels for staff disciplinary hearings or grievance procedures.

Governor Training

Governor training is improving but we have ambition to improve it further. Each term, the Trust offers a session for new Governors, a Chairs' Open Forum and a training session for all Governors. In addition, details of webinars on aspects of governance are provided in 'Governing News'. Local Governing Boards may look to local providers but should do so with caution. The training they provide will be generic and may well be for a governance arrangement which does not apply in CAST. The Trust aims to expand our offer for training in the coming year.

In the future it is our intention to develop a training capacity within our Local Governing Boards to help deliver training. In some of our schools we already have considerable capacity, with National Leaders of Governance. We aim to develop our own cohort of Lead Governors, perhaps CAST Local Leaders of Governance, to help deliver an attractive and bespoke training programme.

Governor Database

Across the Trust there is a wide range of knowledge and expertise in Local Governing Boards. Clerks will be asked to return information for a Governor database, identifying key skills and areas of expertise in the LGB. This knowledge will help develop Governor capacity across the Trust.

Annual Review of Governors and Local Governing Board

Annually, usually at the end of the summer term, LGBs are asked to review their performance as individual members of the LGB and the Board as a whole.

This has four elements:

1. Annual Self-Evaluation of the Local Governing Board, RE and Catholic Life of the School. The Governor for RE and Catholic Life will work with the RE Lead to complete this document which will be shared with the LGB on completion. The evaluation forms part of the school Self Evaluation Form (SEF) and areas for development are included in the School Improvement Plan (SIP) for the following year.
2. CES Skills Audit This is a simple skills audit which enables the LGB to look at the range of skills on the Board, notice any areas where more expertise is needed e.g. Health and Safety or Safeguarding etc. This information is used to inform recruitment of new Governors
3. The Review of the Performance of the Chair of the LGB. The role of the Chair is vital in ensuring that the Board is effective. This review gives every member of the Board the opportunity to contribute to the Chair's self-reflection. Once completed, the Clerk will draw up a summary which will be shared with the Board.
4. Individual Governors Self Review. Each Governor is asked to reflect on their own contribution to the Board. These will be used as a basis of their annual conversation with the Chair.

Link Directors

Each school in CAST has been allocated a Link Director. It is the responsibility of the Link Director to make contact with his/her school and arrange a visit/Zoom meeting in the Autumn term. In the Spring and Summer terms, the Link Director will meet with the ESM, the Headteacher and Chair of Governors

for a strategic discussion about the school. This will include the work of the LGB. The Link Director will visit a school to get to know the school community and its circumstances.

Communicating with the Board

In terms of communicating with CAST, the protocol is that Chairs can communicate on behalf of the LGB directly with their Link Director, by email or telephone. In addition, the LGB Chair can also make contact with their school's ESM regarding school level matters. Where there may be school level concerns, these matters can be addressed to the Director of Education by email.

Communication outside the School

It is important that any public response to media interest regarding CAST schools is coordinated and approved by the Directors. Local Governing Boards may well be in a position to support their Headteacher in responding to media interest, but any response must be forwarded to the Senior Executive Leadership Team and/or the Directors to be approved.

Schools are encouraged to generate stories about the achievements and successes of their pupils and may supply local media with such stories without approval provided that the required regulations with regards to personal information and photographs are followed. Governors are invited to support and challenge their Headteachers to ensure that CAST policies and procedures for data protection are followed.

School Estate

Local Governing Boards must seek approval from the Directors for any changes to fixed assets used by the school. They are also in a good position to advise the Headteacher in the monitoring of the arrangements for effective supervision of building maintenance and minor works.

The Board will have Lead Directors in each of these areas. It is the Board which carries the final accountability to the Bishop and the Secretary of State for outcomes and provision in these areas.

Exclusions

Please see Plymouth CAST Exclusion Policy for more detailed advice. Numbers of and reasons for exclusion should be reported to every meeting of LGB. In line with the Schedule of Accountability, the Lead Governor for SEND should review the reasons for exclusion and in particular check that no child is being excluded for a special educational need or disability.

'In all cases of permanent exclusion and fixed-term exclusions amounting to over 15 days in a term (cumulatively or singly), the decision of the Headteacher must be reviewed by a panel of Governors.'

The panel will be organised by the Headteacher or the Clerk.

Data Protection/GDPR

The Trust are working towards a position whereby all CAST employees, Directors and local Governors use a Plymouth CAST email account for CAST business. As a starting point, all local Governors should use a school email account for Governor business.

Conflicts of Interest

A conflict of interest/loyalty shall not be deemed to occur solely from the fact that any member of the Local Governing Board is also a Director, Charity Trustee or Governor of any other Catholic school or schools or other educational institution(s), diocese, or religious order, or of any other charity which permits its land to be occupied by a Catholic school or schools or other educational institution(s). Any member of the Local Governing Board who has, or can have, any direct or indirect duty or personal interest (including but not limited to any personal financial interest) which conflicts, or may conflict, with his/her duties as a member of the Local Governing Board shall disclose that fact to the Local Governing Board as soon as he/she becomes aware of it. Subject to Article 98A, a person is not permitted to attend any meeting of the Local Governing Board or committee of the Local Governing Board, or any part of any such meeting, where it is possible that a conflict will arise between his/her duty to act solely in the interests of the school and the Multi-Academy Trust Company and any duty or personal interest (including but not limited to any personal financial interest).

A person has a personal financial interest if he/she is in the employment of the Multi-Academy Trust Company or is in receipt of remuneration or the provision of any other benefit directly from the Multi-Academy Trust Company or in some other way is linked to the Multi-Academy Trust Company or the school.

In the event of any conflict between any provision of this Scheme of Delegated Authority and the Articles, the Articles shall prevail.

Any disagreement between the members of the Local Governing Board and the Headteacher or any subcommittee of the Local Governing Board shall be referred to the Directors for their determination.

Indemnity

Subject to the provisions of the Companies Act 2006 every member of the Local Governing Board or other officer or auditor of the Multi-Academy Trust Company acting in relation to the school shall be indemnified out of the assets of the Multi-Academy Trust Company against any liability incurred by him/her in that capacity in defending any proceedings, whether civil or criminal, in which judgment is given in favour or in which he/she is acquitted or in connection with any application in which relief is granted to him/her by the court from liability for negligence, default, breach of duty or breach of trust in relation to the affairs of the Multi-Academy Trust Company, subject to the limitation of S.189 of the Companies Act 2011.

In summary, you are protected if judgement is given in your favour and you are acquitted!

Weak Governance

Plymouth CAST Multi-Academy Trust will stand down a Local Governing Board (LGB), subject to the approval of the Bishop or his representatives, and appoint an Interim Local School Board in one or more of the following circumstances:

- Identification of weak governance
- In response to the outcome of a review of governance or Ofsted inspection

- In response to the outcome of an Ofsted inspection where the school receives an Inadequate judgement.
- Any identified Safeguarding concern within the school.

Resignation and Removal

A Foundation Governor must resign his/her office by notice to the Bishop who appointed him/her and provide a copy of the notice to the Local Governing Board who shall, in turn, provide that copy to the Directors.

A person serving on the Local Governing Board shall cease to hold office if he/she resigns by giving notice to the relevant Local Governing Board. The Local Governing Board must give a copy of the notice to the Directors.

If any person who serves on the Local Governing Board in his/her capacity as a parent ceases to be a parent of a child on roll at the school then he/she shall be entitled to serve the remainder of their term on the Local Governing Board should they wish.

If any person who serves on the Local Governing Board in his/her capacity as an employee at the school ceases to work at the school, then he/she shall be deemed to have resigned and shall cease to serve on the Local Governing Board automatically on termination of his/her work at the school.

Disqualification of Membership of the Local Governing Board

No person shall be qualified to serve on the Local Governing Board unless he/she is aged 18 or over at the date of his/her election or appointment. No current pupil of the school shall be entitled to serve on the Local Governing Board.

A person serving on the Local Governing Board shall cease to hold office if he/she:

- Becomes incapable by reason of mental disorder, illness or injury of managing or administering their affairs.
- Is absent without the permission of the Chair of the Local Governing Board from all the meetings of the Local Governing Board held within a period of six months and the Local Governing Board resolves that the office be vacated.
- Is the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order or an interim order.
- Is subject to a disqualification under the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986 or to an order made under section 429(2)(b) of the Insolvency Act 1986 (failure to pay under county court administration order).
- Has been removed from the office of charity trustee or trustee for a charity.
- Is included in the list kept by the Secretary of State under section 1 of the Protection of Children Act 1999; or
- Disqualified from working with children in accordance with Sections 28, 29 or 29A of the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000; or
- If they have ever been convicted of an offence involving violence, dishonesty or deception, or any sexual offence which is not a protected offence; or
- Convicted of causing a nuisance or disturbance on school and/or educational premises; or

- Sentenced to imprisonment (whether suspended or not), in the UK or elsewhere, for a period of not less than three months.
- At any time, been convicted of any criminal offence
- Has not provided to the Chair of the Board of Directors the proper criminal records certification as required by law and outlined by the Diocese and the Catholic Education Service.
- A Foundation Governor must resign his/her office by notice to the Bishop who appointed him/her and provide a copy of the notice to the Local Governing Board who shall, in turn, provide that copy to the Directors.
- Upon becoming so disqualified the Local Governing Board shall inform the Directors and the Bishop.

For the full details please refer to the Scheme of Delegated Authority, Introduction.

Appendix I

The Nolan Principles

(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. They should not do so to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends.
- **Integrity** – Holders of public office should not place themselves under the financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their official duties.
- **Objectively** – In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit
- **Accountability** – Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.
- **Openness** – Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands
- **Honesty** – Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest
- **Leadership** – Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example

Appendix II

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the role of the LGB when Ofsted come?

The Ofsted School Inspection Handbook (September 2021) states that, “Inspectors will seek evidence of the impact of those responsible for governance. This includes maintained school Governors, proprietors or school trustees. In a Multi-Academy Trust, this may include members of the Local Governing Board at school level, as well as the trustees.”

The footnote goes on to explain that “in a Multi-Academy Trust, this could include meeting with a Local Governing Board where relevant responsibilities are devolved in accordance with the Scheme of Delegated Authority.”

In the Plymouth CAST Scheme of Delegated Authority, due to the size and geographical reach of the Trust, the Board of Directors have made the distinct decision to delegate the responsibility to LGBs, to attend an Ofsted inspection. This will most likely be the Chair of Governors due to their detailed knowledge of the school. It is acknowledged that due to the local links with the school community, this is the most rigorous approach to governance at school level. Furthermore, it is the role of the school’s Link Director to both support and hold the Chair of Governors to account for the impact of governance on school improvement in line with the Scheme of Delegated Authority. The mechanism to do this will be through termly meetings and attendance at LGB Board meetings to quality assure the work of the Governing Board.

Will Ofsted have to approve the new role for Local Governing Boards?

No. The new role for Local Governing Boards is approved by the Directors.

What is the role of the LGB when appointing the Headteacher or other senior reserved posts?

LGBs are invited to advise and support the Senior Executive Leadership Team, delegated by the Directors as employers, in senior appointments. In practice, this means sitting on appointment panels.

Is the LGB responsible for the Headteacher’s appraisal and/or pay?

The LGB is not the Headteacher’s employer or line manager and as such has no statutory role in the appraisal of the Headteacher or determination of their pay. However, the SEL Team will ensure that Governors are involved in the appraisal process so that they can contribute their knowledge of the impact of the Headteacher.

What is the role of the LGB in a redundancy process or any major restructuring of staff, including reviews of job descriptions for senior staff?

The LGB will be consulted, although they have no statutory role.

Does the LGB approve the budget?

The LGB can work with the Headteacher to help them to finalise a budget, in agreement with the Education and Standards Manager and supported by the School Business Manager to be presented to the Chief Finance Officer.

Is the LGB responsible for educational standards?

The LGB will bring their knowledge of educational standards and how they might be improved to the work of the school, but it is the Headteacher who is responsible for educational standards.

Are 'Lead' Governors responsible for certain areas?

Lead Governors have 'oversight' of key areas including SEND, Safeguarding, Statutory Grants, Health and Safety. The accountability rests with the Trust Board and there is a Lead Director with oversight of each of these areas.

Are Governors responsible for Health and Safety in the school?

As above, the Board is the employer and as such are responsible for Health and Safety across all CAST schools. However, LGBs have an important role to play in supporting a safe school environment and should undertake their responsibilities in line with the Schedule of Accountability.

Does the LGB need to approve any policies?

The role of the LGB is to adopt any statutory or other policies approved by the Board for CAST schools and then to approve any other policies as required in agreement with the Headteacher and Education and Standards Manager.

Can the LGB initiate or bid for capital projects?

The support and expertise of the LGB in bidding for capital projects is very welcome, but any bids must be approved by the SEL Team and the Board.

Procedure for appointing Governors, Foundation Governors?

See the Scheme of Delegated Authority

Do we have Terms of Reference?

The Terms of Reference for the Local Governing Board are contained in the Scheme of Delegated Authority Part 1.