



Hall Park
Academy

The Hall Park Academy

Local Academy Board (LAB) Handbook

Guidance to support the effective operation of the LAB

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Introduction

The Redhill Academy Trust came into being in 2011 as a result of governors and staff at the Redhill Academy supporting the Wheldon School in Carlton, Nottingham. The Redhill Academy had recently been designated as 'Outstanding' by Ofsted and was matched with Wheldon who had received an Ofsted 'Inadequate' judgement. This set the ethos of the Trust as a school improvement organisation with the ultimate aim of helping to raise the achievement of local children, whatever their background. Since then, the Trust has only grown as it seeks to support other schools and students.

All academies in the Trust work to the following four principles:


1. High expectations of all students.
2. Valuing and celebrating academic achievement.
3. Outstanding teaching for all students.
4. Widening students' experiences through a range of extra-curricular activities including sports and the performing arts.

As a governor in one of the Trust's academies we expect that you will support these principles, whilst challenging, analysing and evaluating the work of the academy you serve.

We hope that this handbook will help you fulfil your role as a governor on one of the Trust's Local Academy Boards. We would also like to thank you for giving up your time to help the Trust improve the achievements, and ultimately, the outcomes of all our students.



Andrew Burns
Trust Principal



Stephen Hopkins
Chair of the Trust Executive Board

Responsibilities of the Local Academy Board (LAB)

As a member of the Local Academy Board, you will share equally with the other members of the board the responsibility of exercising the powers and responsibilities delegated by the Trust Executive Board.

The Local Academy Board has a range of responsibilities:

- Supporting good governance of the school
- Safeguarding and promoting the values of the school
- Supporting the Headteacher of the school and being a critical friend
- Maintaining a detailed understanding of the strengths and areas for development of the school
- Regularly reviewing performance and progress and monitoring data
- Monitoring the achievement, quality of teaching and behaviour and safety
- Supporting effective financial governance
- Engagement with the school's key stakeholders e.g. parents/carers, pupils and staff
- Reviewing the progress of the Academy's Improvement Plan (AIP).

Areas on which the Local Academy Board supports the governance of the school, offering views and feedback include (this is not an exhaustive list):

- Vision, values and school strategy;
- Student achievement;
- Behaviour;
- Attendance;
- The curriculum;
- School premises development and capital bid priorities;
- Safeguarding;
- Parental engagement;
- Communicating ideas from the community to the Trust Executive Board;
- Promoting parent participation.

The Trust and the school leadership team will support the Local Academy Board by providing information, support and guidance.

Role of the Local Academy Board Member

Local Academy Board members offer their experience and expertise to strengthen the decision-making process to support the school's continuous improvement.

Local Academy Boards have some delegated decision-making authority and act as a 'critical friend' for the school. This means:

- They provide support and advice
 - Acting as a sounding board for ideas
 - Providing feedback on proposals
 - Helping where needed

- They also provide challenge
 - Asking constructive questions to ensure that decisions are made on the basis of sound information
 - Exploring alternative proposals

An effective Local Academy Board Member supports the school and wants the school to succeed. An effective Local Academy Board Member has a relationship with the school that means they can also be honest where there are concerns. They have a direct link to the Trust Board should concerns need to be raised.

Commitment

Being a member of the board requires a commitment. As a Local Academy Board member, there is an expectation that you come to meetings prepared; having read and familiarised yourself with the agenda and any accompanying papers as well as being prepared to ask relevant questions.

There will be opportunities for you to visit the school during the day to help inform the work of the Local Academy Board. Any visit is planned in advance and focussed on a consultation area. Your report on a visit will then feed in to the consultation response for the school or Trust.

Conduct at meetings

As a Local Academy Board Member you will be asked to sign a 'Code of Conduct'.

During the meeting, it is expected that all members abide by a set of guiding principles:

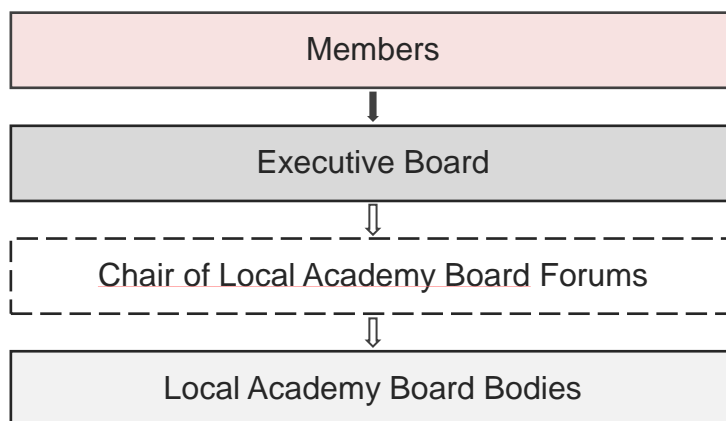
- Support and be guided by the Chair of the meeting.
- Respect other people's opinions and ideas.
- Actively participate in discussions.
- Limit the length of individual contributions.
- Ensure contributions are delivered in a positive and constructive manner, even when challenging or difficult issues are being discussed.
- Respect confidentiality.

Safeguarding

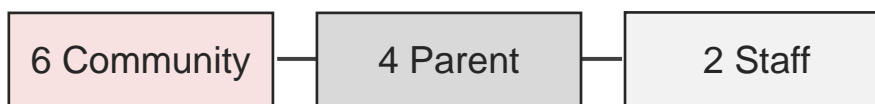
All Local Academy Board members are required to have an up-to-date DBS (formerly CRB) check, as well as undertake safeguarding training as required.

Meeting structure and membership

Structure:



Membership¹:



Meeting organisation

Frequency

The Local Academy Board will meet a minimum of four times a year. Meetings dates are usually agreed annually and communicated by the Clerk. The LAB Finance and Premises Committee will meet at least twice a year.

Clerking

The Local Academy Board is clerked by one of the Academy Clerks.

Chairing

The Local Academy Board will elect a Chair and Vice Chair at the first meeting of the academic year. Employees of the school are not eligible to stand as Chair or Vice Chair.

¹ For further information see the Terms of Reference Section 2.

The Chair and Vice Chair can resign at any time by giving notice in writing to the LAB Clerk.

Appointment and Removal of Governors

See Terms of Reference Annex 1

Meeting agenda

The Trust Clerk co-ordinates the agenda with input from the Executive Team, Headteacher and the LAB Chair in advance. It is expected that Headteacher and Chair will work together in customising their agenda.

The agenda will be circulated by the Clerk seven days in advance of the meeting. Supporting papers should also be circulated, where possible, within this timeframe.

Quorum

To enable an effective meeting to take place there should be at least three members present.

Voting

Where applicable voting will take place by a simple majority through a show of hands, with the meeting chair having the casting vote if the decision is split.

Any other business

This section of the agenda allows for last-minute items to be discussed. 'Last minute' means things that happened after the agenda was circulated that cannot wait for the next meeting. Members should speak to the Chair before the meeting starts to request an item for discussion under any other business. The Chair will determine if the item can be discussed, if members are not in a position to discuss something knowledgeably, that item should be deferred to the next meeting.

Declaration of interests

Annually you will be asked to complete a declaration of business and pecuniary interest from. Additionally, at the beginning of each meeting you will be asked to declare any business or other interests in any item being discussed at the meeting.

Meeting minutes

The Clerk will produce meeting minutes for approval of the Local Academy Board at their subsequent meeting, which will be held centrally.

Items deemed confidential will be minuted separately and withheld from public circulation.

Visiting the school

As a Local Academy Board Member, you may visit the school in order to fulfil your responsibilities and gain a better understanding of how the school operates on a day to day basis. You do not have an automatic right of entry to the school and all visits must be agreed in advance and have a clear focus. A visit may be undertaken to:

- Improve your knowledge of the school and the people that work in it.
- Support the monitoring responsibilities of the LAB.
- Assist the LAB in discussions and making informed decisions.

Meeting programme

The programme of meetings will include:

Full Local Academy Board			
DATE		TIME	CLERK
1	Tuesday 21 September	6.00pm	Tina Plaskitt
2	Tuesday 16 November	6.00pm	Tina Plaskitt
3	Tuesday 15 March	6.00pm	Tina Plaskitt
4	Tuesday 28 June	6.00pm	Tina Plaskitt

Business and Finance Committee			
DATE		TIME	CLERK
1	Tuesday 25 January	6.00pm	Tina Plaskitt
2	Tuesday 17 May	6.00pm	Tina Plaskitt

Meeting Scheduling and Agenda

Each LAB meeting agenda should consider the latest student data dashboard, Headteacher's report, the RAG rated Academy Improvement Plan and Risk Analysis. It is strongly suggested that each meeting of the LAB starts with a presentation from a senior member of staff from the academy on a current issue of interest to the governors. This should be followed by questions, discussions and scrutiny from the board.

LABs should also discuss the following agenda items at the above Full LAB meetings.

Autumn 1

- Review of examination results from the previous summer.
- Update on any premises developments.

Autumn 2

- Curriculum model for following academic year.
- Any performance management issues.

Spring

- Findings of latest review of teaching and learning.
- Staffing for the following academic year.

Summer

- Proposed site improvements.
- Priorities for next year's Academy Improvement Plan.

Sequence of LAB meetings with Trust meetings

Each termly sequence will be as follows.



Local Academy Board Code of Conduct

Local Academy Board Members are ambassadors for both the school and the Trust. The Code of Conduct sets out key expectations of the role.

Roles & Responsibilities

- We understand our role on the board and will operate within it.
- We will always be mindful of our responsibility to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of the school.
- We will actively support and challenge the Headteacher.
- We agree to adhere to the Trust's rules and policies and the procedures of the Board as set out by the relevant advisory documents and law.
- When formally speaking or writing in our Local Academy Board role we will ensure our comments reflect current organisational policy even if they might be different to our personal views; when communicating in our private capacity (including on social media) we will be mindful of and strive to uphold the reputation of the Trust and school.
- We accept that the Local Academy Board is a corporate body and we will not act without proper authority of the full Local Academy Board.
- We will follow Trust procedures and policies in making or responding to complaints or criticism about the school.

Commitment

- We will make full efforts to attend all meetings and where we cannot attend explain in advance why we are unable to.
- We will prepare for meetings by reading all papers in advance.
- We will consider seriously our individual and collective needs for induction, training and development, and will undertake relevant training.
- We will get to know the school well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in school activities.

Relationships

- We will operate as a team and always in the best interests of the school. Where conflicts and disagreements arise, we will seek to resolve these professionally and with respect. We will attempt to resolve issues confidentially within the Local Academy Board in the first instance.
- We will express views openly, courteously and respectfully in all communications.
- We will listen to and respect the views of others and be loyal to collective decisions made by the Local Academy Board. Decisions reached at Local Academy Board meetings are made public through minutes and reports.



- We will ensure contributions are delivered in a positive and constructive manner, even when challenging or difficult issues are being discussed.

Confidentiality

- We will ensure confidentiality in respect of the discussions on which the decisions were based.
- We will not share information gained as a governor with anyone outside the Board without the clear permission of the Chair.

Conflicts of interest

- 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 board's business in the Register of Business Interests.
- We accept that the Register of Business Interests will be published on the school's website.
- We will also declare any conflict of loyalty at the start of any meeting should the situation arise.

Breach of this code of conduct

If we believe this code has been breached, we will raise this issue with the chair and the chair will investigate; the board will only use suspension/removal as a last resort after seeking to resolve any difficulties or disputes in more constructive ways.

Should it be the chair that we believe has breached this code, another board member, such as the Vice Chair will investigate.

Signed: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____ **Capacity:** PARENT/COMMUNITY/STAFF