

Information about becoming a Governor within Empower Trust



Mission and Vision

Mission Statement:

‘Inspire, Empower and Achieve – a commitment to excellence’

Vision Statement:

‘To create a home for world class learning that improves the lives of each child in our family of schools.’

The Vision statement is exemplified by a set of strategic objectives:

- To facilitate and promote the development of happy, confident and enthusiastic life-long learners
- To guide, support and inspire every child and adult to fulfil their potential
- To develop a culture of inclusion and diversity
- To adopt a values-led approach to all aspects of school life
- To deliver an exciting and engaging curriculum
- To promote high aspirations and ambitions for future success
- To maintain a focus on maintaining the mental health and well-being of children and adults

The vision and mission statements are underpinned by the Empower Trust Values:

- Empowerment – ‘We actively promote opportunities for every child, adult and school to influence their own practice and future.’
- Ambition – ‘We encourage and support every child, adult and school to aim high and achieve their aspirations.’
- Collaboration – ‘We work together to support everyone to achieve their aims.’
- Positivity– ‘We adopt a ‘can do’ attitude and an optimistic approach.’
- Respect – ‘We are thoughtful and considerate to ourselves, others and the environment.’
- Integrity – ‘We are honest, transparent and fair in everything we do.’

Benefits of being a Governor

There are numerous positive, immediate and lasting outcomes to becoming a school governor, each resulting in valuable transferable skills. Being a school governor could:

- develop existing and new skills
- develop board level skills
- help you get to know and support the community in which you live and/or work

It can build experience in:

- strategic planning and development
- setting aims and objectives for reaching ambitious goals
- working within diverse teams
- gaining greater awareness of the education system
- being part of debates and asking challenging questions to support school improvement

Who can become a Governor?

We encourage applications from people from all walks of life so that our boards have a diverse range of skills and experience to support and develop our schools. On the following page is a list of eligibility criteria, but equally important is your commitment to work as part of a team that understands the work we do in our schools.

What we require from you

- Acknowledgment that accepting office as a governor member involves the commitment of significant amounts of time and energy
- Active involvement in the work off the governing body with a willingness to accept a fair share of the responsibilities, including service on committees or working groups
- A commitment to make full efforts to attend all meetings and where attendance is not possible, provide an explanation of absence in advance.
- A commitment to get to know the school and respond to opportunities to get involve in school activities
- A commitment to visit the school, with all visits arranged in advance with the Headteacher and undertaken within the framework established by the Trust
- A consideration of individual and collective needs for induction, training and development and a commitment to undertake relevant training
- Acceptance that in the interests of open government your full name, date of appointment, terms of office, roles of the LGB, attendance records, relevant and pecuniary interests, category of governor will be published on the school and Trust website
- To undertake an induction with the Headteacher and Chair of the LGB
- To complete a DBS check, Declaration of Interest Form, Skills Audit and any other documentation as required

Further info can be found in Empower Trust LGB Code of Conduct on the Trust website

Introduction

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your interest in becoming a Governor on a Local Governing Body within our family of schools at Empower Trust.

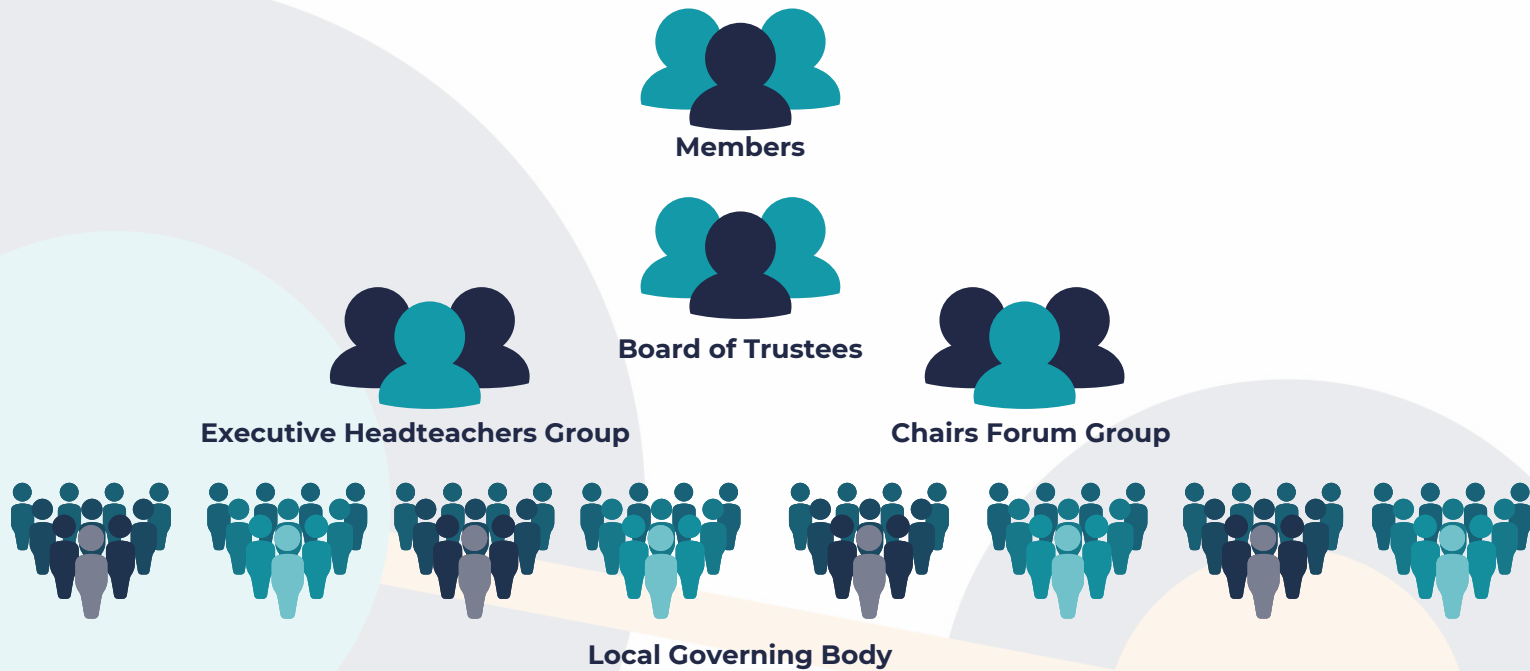
This important role as a volunteer supports effective school leadership and achieves best outcomes for our children's futures.

The effectiveness of a governing board depends on the skills, commitment and knowledge of its members and how they work together and with school leaders.

The Members, Board of Trustees, Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Local Governing Body and Headteachers believe it is essential that all new Local Governors receive a comprehensive induction package covering a broad range of issues and topics. There is a commitment to ensure that new Governors are given the necessary information and support to fulfil their role with confidence. The process is seen as an investment, leading to more effective governance and retention of Governors.

Formed in June 2018 with 6 founding schools, and now with 8 schools in our growing family of schools, we are a Primary focussed Trust with a combination of Primary Junior and Infant schools, many with Nursery provision. Empower Trust celebrates the fact that every school is different. Each academy retains a unique ethos and character to meet the needs of its local community. Local Governing Bodies ensure local needs are prioritised. We aim to support all children to become successful learners and to develop into young people of whom the family, academy and community can be proud.

Governance Structure



Roles & Responsibilities

The Members of the Trust are guardians of the governance of the Trust and oversee the MAT – they may amend the articles of association, appoint and remove Trustees and give direction by special resolution to the Board.

Trustees are responsible for the general control and management of the administration of the trust, and in accordance with the provisions set out in the memorandum and articles of association and its funding agreement. The Trust Board is legally responsible and accountable for all statutory functions, for the performance of all schools within the trust, and must approve a written scheme of delegation of financial powers that maintains robust internal control arrangements.

In addition it must carry out the three core governance functions:

Ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction

Hold the executive to account for the educational performance of the trust's schools and their pupils, and the performance management of staff

Oversee the financial performance of the trust and make sure its money is well spent

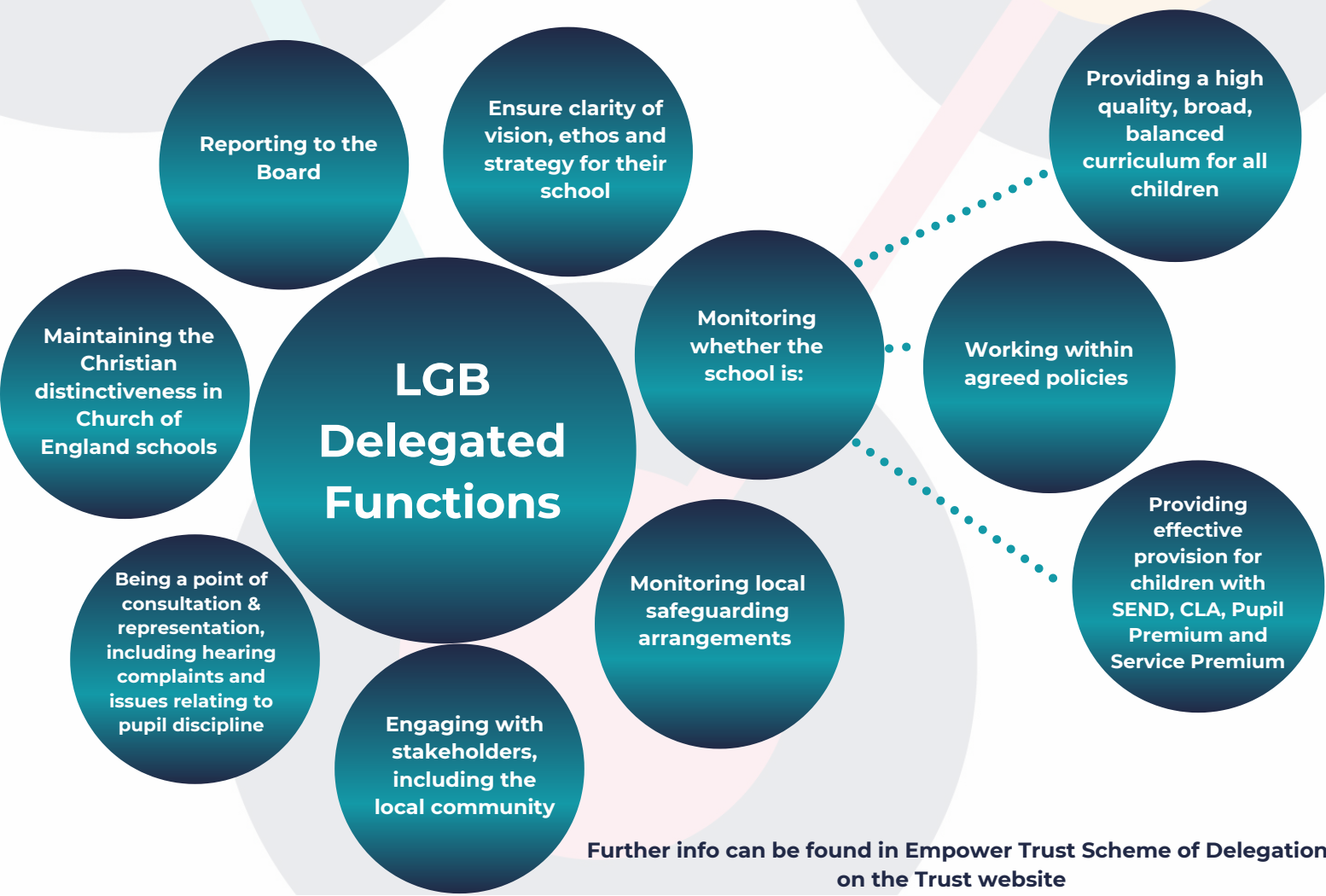
The Role of the Local Governing Body (LGB)

The Board of Trustees has established Local Governing Bodies (LGBs) as academy committees to carry out some of its school level governance functions. The LGB monitors and reports to the Board of Trustees.

The LGB is responsible for providing oversight to the Trustees of the effective running of the academies including monitoring curriculum quality and provision, pupil and staff wellbeing, monitoring progress towards Key Performance Indicators and the effectiveness of local safeguarding arrangements. It also monitors provision for children with SEND, Looking After Children, Pupil Premium, Services Premium and Sports Premium in accordance with the agreed Terms of Reference. Actions are restricted for the single school for which it is responsible.

The LGB nominates its own Chair, who is formally appointed by the Trustees.

The emphasis of the Trust is to delegate as much local governance to each school as possible, particularly where schools are judged to be Good or Outstanding. Delegated functions include:



Core Strategic Functions of the LGB



Ensure the strategic direction:

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction for the school
- Taking a strategic role in promoting the school improvement strategy and monitoring progress towards priorities and targets
- Aligning with, and take forward, the Trust's vision in a way that reflects the specific qualities and characteristics of the Academy
- Meeting statutory duties

Ensure accountability:

- Playing a role in appointing the headteacher and in headteacher performance management
- Monitoring the educational performance, the curriculum, the quality of care and provision of the school and its pupils, and the performance management of staff
- Monitoring progress towards targets and contributing to school self-evaluation and
- Implementing all policies prepared and approved by the Trust, for example, policies regarding admissions, safeguarding and health and safety
- Engaging with stakeholders
- Complying with and adhering to the terms of any Trust protocol or any guidance issued by the Trust from time to time
- Exercising the delegated functions set out in the Trust's Scheme of Delegation as made available by the Trustees and as amended from time to time



Ensure financial probity:

- Monitoring spending against the budget
- Ensuring value for money is obtained
- Ensuring local risks to the school are managed

***The majority of financial probity is managed by the Trust**



The Nolan Principles

As well as having the time to carry out the three core functions, governors must be prepared to adopt the seven principles of public life, the Nolan Principles.

Selflessness

We will act solely in terms of the public interest.

Integrity

We will avoid placing ourselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence us in our work. We will not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for ourselves, our family, or our friends. We will declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

Objectivity

We will act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

Accountability

We are accountable to the public for our decisions and actions and will submit ourselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

Openness

We will act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information will not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

Honesty

We will be truthful

Leadership

We will exhibit these principles in our own behaviour. We will actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.



Eight Effective elements of Governance



According to the NGA, research and practice from a range of sectors tells us there are eight key ingredients to ensure governing bodies fulfil their role well.

The NGA have explored these eight topics in more depth to help governors ensure they are operating as an effective governing board.

As an NGA Member you can access more information about this on the NGA website.

Essential Skills and attributes of good governors

Committed

Devoting the required time and energy to the role and being ambitious to achieve the best possible outcomes for young people. Prepared to give time, skills and knowledge to developing themselves and others in order to create highly effective governance.

Confident

Of an independent mind, able to lead and contribute to courageous conversations, to express their opinion and to play an active role on the board.

Curious

Possessing an enquiring mind and an analytical approach and understanding the value of meaningful questioning.

Challenging

Providing appropriate challenge to the status quo, not taking information or data at face value and always seeking to improve things.

Collaborative

Prepared to listen to and work in partnership with others and understanding the importance of building strong working relationships within the board and with executive leaders, staff, parents and carers, pupils/students, the local community and employers.

Critical

Understanding the value of critical friendship which enables challenge and support. Self-reflective, pursuing learning and development opportunities to improve their own and whole board effectiveness.

Creative

Able to challenge conventional wisdom and be open-minded about new approaches to problem-solving; recognising the value of innovation and creative thinking to organisational development and success.

Declaration of eligibility to become a Governor

- I am aged 18 years or over
- I do not already hold governorship at the same school
- I am not the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order, an interim bankruptcy restrictions order, a debt relief restrictions order, an interim debt relief restrictions order or a sequestration that has not been discharged, annulled or reduced
- I have not been removed as a trustee for a charity by an order made by the Charity Commission or the High Court in the grounds of misconduct or mismanagement in administration of the charity
- I have not been removed, under section 34 of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005, from being concerned in the management or control of any body
- I have not been disqualified from being a company director and /or a charity trustee
- I have not been disqualified from holding office as a governor
- I have not been removed from office as an elected governor within the last 5 years
- I am not disqualified from working with children, barred from regulated activity and /or disqualified from registering from childminding or providing daycare
- I am not disqualified from registering under Part 3 of the Childcare Act 2006
- I am not subject to a direction of the Secretary of State under section 142 of the Education Act 2002, or to a section 128 direction
- I am not disqualified from being an independent school proprietor, teacher or employee by the Secretary of State
- I have not, in the five years prior to applying to be a governor, received a sentence of imprisonment, suspended or otherwise, for a minimum of 3 months without the option of a fine
- I have not, in the twenty years prior to applying to be a governor, been previously convicted of any offence and received a sentence of imprisonment for a maximum of two and a half years.
- I have not, at any time, received a sentence of imprisonment for a minimum of five years
- I have not in the five years prior to applying to be a governor, been fined for causing a nuisance or disturbance on education premises
- I am not subject to a disqualification order under the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000

Support provided by the Trust

The Trust has a qualified Governance Professional who oversees the Trust Board committees and all school Local Governing Bodies.

The Governance Professional is on hand to help with any governance related queries, collates governance documents and circulates to LGBs, provides a link between LGBs and the Trust Board, signposts to resources and training and manages the Governor Hub for all Boards.

In addition to induction and ongoing support from the school and governing board, the Trust provides;

Access to the Governor Hub

Governor Hub is a secure online facility the Trust use to share and save all documents relating to governance. All governance documents are shared via the Noticeboard facility and governors receive an email notification from Governor Hub.

Access to resources from the NGA (National Governance Association)

The Trust subscribes to the NGA and all governors have access to the resources available to members.

Access to NGA Learning Link

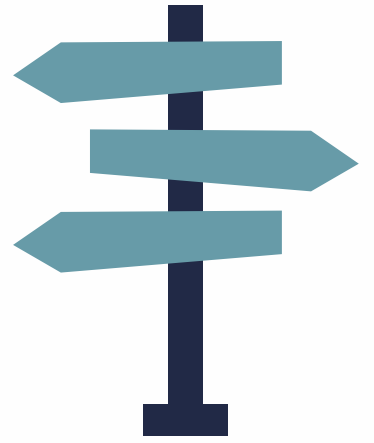
The NGA Learning Link is an online learning platform available to all governors within the Trust. The platform provides a comprehensive choice of bitesize e-learning modules to assist you in your role as a governor.

We recommend that you start with the Core Modules section, which is a suite of 8 core modules covering key governance areas and is perfect for those new to governance or those looking for a refresher.

 Governance: Your role, responsibilities and organisation	 Progress & attainment: using data to improve educational outcomes	 Compliance: Assuring your organisation, keeping it safe, secure and solvent
 Your organisation: Understanding school structures and what children should learn	 Finance: Making the most of what you've got	 Effectiveness: Governance making an impact, changing lives
 Strategy: Living your values, reaching your vision, managing the risk	 Working Together: Building the team and improving the organisation	 Safeguarding: The governors role (2021)

The Trust also provide:

- Guidance Notes and support for school note takers
- Draft forward agendas
- Minute templates



Further reading



Empower Trust Scheme of Delegation



Governance Handbook



LGB Terms of Reference



LGB Code of Conduct



The DfE Governance Handbook



The DfE Keeping Children Safe in Education



The DfE Competency Framework for Governance



The NGA website



The NGA Learning Link online training courses