



UNITY
SCHOOLS PARTNERSHIP

MAKING REMARKABLE CHANGE HAPPEN

The Handbook for Local Governing Bodies

2020

Unity Schools Partnership

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Paragraphs in this document, enclosed in this blue background, are required practice for governors and local governing bodies.

FOREWORD

A handbook for governors of schools in the Unity Schools Partnership was published in October 2017. This version is updated for February 2020 and reflects the growth of the trust and Government expectations.

The key principles of governance in this trust are:

- children come first in every decision
- no challenge is too much to drive improvement

Governors are one of the largest volunteer forces in the country and have an important part to play in raising academy standards. The role of the local governing board is key to the effectiveness of an academy. In 2016, Ofsted described common characteristics of what it described as 'stronger trusts' and included, 'clear frameworks of governance, accountability and delegation'. The trusts it described positively were 'able to draw on the expertise of a cadre of trustees or non-executive directors who use their range of skills and experience to monitor performance.'

Unity Schools Partnership is a partnership of schools located in Suffolk, Essex, East London and Cambridgeshire. We share the same values, face similar issues and are geographically close enough to support and challenge each other. We share a Research School.

We recognise the unique characteristics of each of the communities in which we work and how they are reflected in distinctive school cultures. We encourage cultural diversity, celebrate the special qualities of each of our schools and recognise that communities to become sustainable must develop and grow. We look for what works and look to make sure that all children in our trust learn from the knowledge.

We are working to a partnership that respects, sustains and supports. Our model is about creating interdependence. We subscribe to a set of shared values, principles and operational processes that ensure quality education for all our young people. Our central belief is that every young life is special, open to possibility, gifted with the potential to change the world for the better but also bound by the limits of their own circumstances. Our ambition is to unlock the potential of all children, remove the barriers to aspiration and ensure that all our children succeed.

Governors play a key role in the success of our academies and the trust as a whole. We are proud to support them in their roles. This Guidance to Governors aims to set out their key roles and the trust's expectations that their work leads to children and young people having a better education than would otherwise be the case.

Dr Tim Coulson

Chief Executive



1. TRUST GOVERNANCE

1.1 Introduction

This guidance sets out what is expected of local governing bodies in Unity Schools Partnership (USP) and the support provided to enable all governors to excel in their role. Strong governance is an essential element in achieving our aim of outstanding academies.

The ambition of the trust is “Making remarkable change happen.”

Unity Schools Partnership transforms lives. Through geographical hubs of like-minded schools and a vision of excellence that is shared by all, schools smash through barriers to achieve more than others think possible.

Vision of the trust

The vision of Unity Schools Partnership is to achieve the highest standards of education in its primary, secondary and special schools. It is our intention that all trust schools, and the trust as a whole, is recognised locally and nationally for the exceptional quality of its educational provision. We are a family of interdependent schools with a shared ambition to transform lives. We have a commitment to the development of a very high quality and evidence-informed model of how excellence is achieved. Our work is fostered by geographical hubs of schools in close proximity that understand their specific communities.

Values

The trust expects its work to be characterised by:

- ethical leadership
- inclusion
- excellent communication
- endless ambition
- strong relationships
- belief in success for all

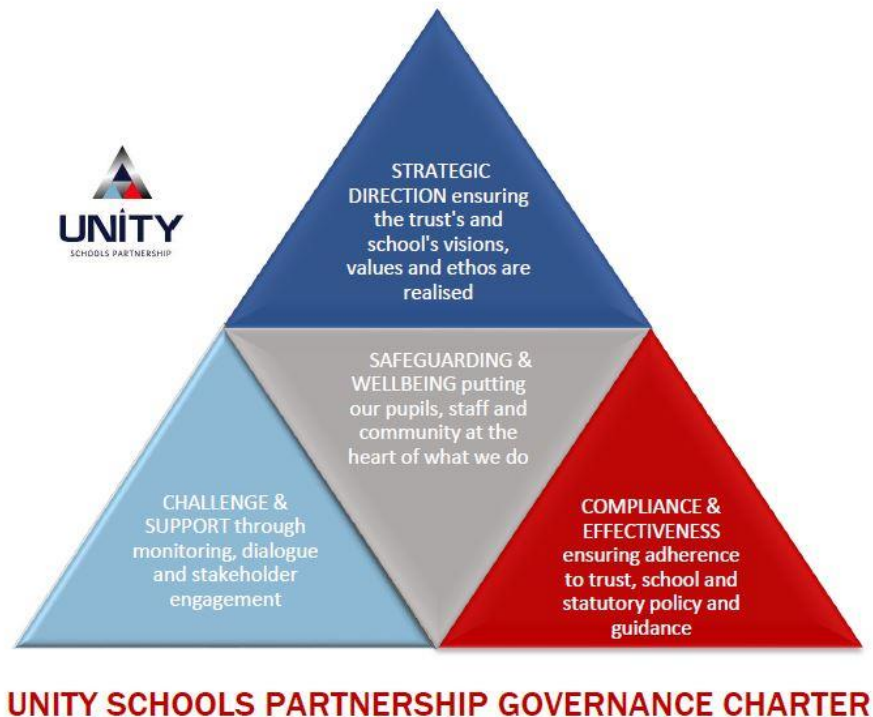
The ambition is that the trust moves a group of schools over the next few years to 2023, generally achieving at very low levels or below national averages, to achieving, whatever measure is being considered, in the top quartile of schools and trusts nationally.

The Trust Board is the legal entity which is ultimately accountable for the three core functions of governance as defined by the Department for Education (DfE).

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
- Holding the leadership of the trust and schools to account for the educational performance of the schools and their pupils
- Overseeing the financial performance of the trust and making sure its money is well spent.

USP Governance Charter

To support the Trust Board, we aim to develop and support our local governing bodies so that they can competently discharge their responsibilities as set out in the [Unity Schools' Partnership Governance Charter](#).



In exercising their functions, governors shall:

- act with integrity, objectivity and honesty and in the best interests of children, the trust and schools
- be open about the decisions they make and the actions they take and be prepared to explain their decisions and actions to interested parties (ie. trust executive and board, Ofsted)

This guidance is underpinned by:

- The Governors' Handbook and Governors' Competency Framework provided by DfE, which can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/governance-handbook>

- The UK legislation for Academy Governance (Roles, Procedures and Allowances) (England) Regulations 2013, which can be found at:

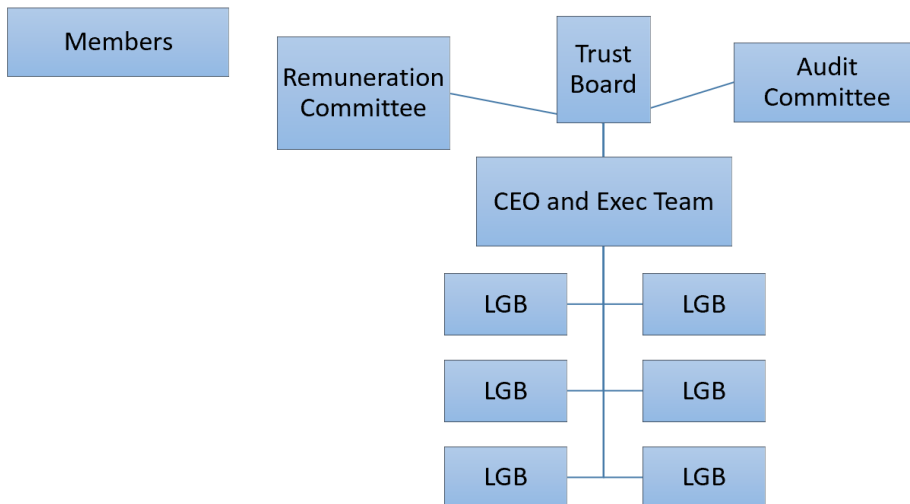
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2013/1624/contents/made>

1.2 Governance Structure of a Multi Academy Trust

A Multi Academy Trust [MAT] is a single legal structure that is responsible for multiple academies within it. All academy trusts have Articles of Association, the legal governing document that sets out the Governance structure and procedures for the academy trust. The articles for Unity Schools Partnership can be found at

[Unity Schools Partnership Articles of Association](#)

USP Governance Structure



1.3 The Role of Members

Members are similar to a company's shareholders - they sit above the board of trustees in an academy trust and have a largely hands-off role.

Their key responsibilities include appointing the trustees and holding them to account for the successful governance of the trust.

Unity Schools Partnership currently has 4 members, with one, the Chair of the Trust Board, who is also a trustee.

1.4 Trust Board of Directors

A board governs the trust. Board members are referred to as both trustees as the trust is a charity and as directors as the trust is also a company limited by guarantee. The trust has a scheme of delegation that sets out both responsibility and accountability and how together the board, trust executive, local governing bodies and school leaders work together to achieve the ambitions for each school in the trust. The scheme of delegation has been updated for January 2020 and can be found at [USP Scheme of Delegation](#) and aims to help governors on Local Governing Bodies focus on what really matters – performance and achievement in the classroom.

Under the Articles of Association, USP can have no less than 3, and up to 11 Directors. There are currently 9 directors plus the Chief Executive. As of January 2020, Members and Directors are:



More information about the Trust Board and its membership can be found on the [Unity Schools Partnership website](#).

1.5 Trust Board Commitment to Establish Local Governing Bodies.

The Directors of the Trust Board establish Local Governing Bodies as committees of the Trust (Articles of Association Article 100)

The Directors determine and approve the Local Governing Body Terms of Reference and review these Terms at the start of each academic year (Article 104).

The Directors also determine and approve the delegation of powers, responsibilities and duties to the Local Governing Body and review this Scheme of Delegation at the start of each academic year (Article 105).

The Directors may change the governance of an academy where it has serious cause for concern including

- Standards of performance of pupils at the Academy are unacceptably low
- Serious breakdown in the way the Academy is governed or managed
- Safety of pupils or staff is threatened
- Financial mismanagement or failure to operate within budget
- An individual governor or governors are not abiding by the Code of Conduct

2. LOCAL GOVERNING BODY TERMS OF REFERENCE

2.1 Composition of the Local Governing Body

In its Governance Handbook the DFE gives the following guidance on the size of LGBs.

“All boards should be tightly focused and no larger than they need to be to have all the necessary skills to carry out their functions effectively, with everyone actively contributing relevant skills and experience. In general, the department believes that smaller boards are more likely to be cohesive and dynamic, and able to act more decisively. Boards cannot afford to carry passengers.”

The model the trust is operating is 9 governors on each LGB. However, we are not looking to disrupt high-functioning groups of governors if they can justify having a larger number, require additional skills or support or are succession planning.

The local governing body (LGB) of each academy is appointed by the academy trust board. The LGB will generally include:

- 2 elected Parent Governors
- Staff Governors, one of which is the Principal/Headteacher and the other elected,
- Community governors appointed by the trust, 1 of which is generally a trust or school leader identified from the wider trust community.

Where there are vacancies, the Chair or Clerk should contact the Trust Governance Advisor for support in filling these.

All governors are appointed by the Board of Directors and there is an expectation that they will preserve and develop the principles and values of the trust and the academy to which they are appointed. Newly appointed governors will be invited to meet with the CEO as part of their induction.

Governors, as well as Parent Governors, can be parents of children in the academy. However, the total number of parents on the governing body in any capacity should be less than half of the total number of governors.

It is not recommended that community governors are also members of staff. However, members of staff from other academies within the trust, as well as members of the Trust central team, can serve as governors.

The Local Governing Bodies may appoint “associate members” for their specific areas of expertise.

The trust has a specific agreement with the diocese about the appointment of governors at church academies within the trust.

2.2 The Role of the Local Governing Body

The Governors exercise the responsibilities and duties delegated by the Trust Board as set out in the [Scheme of Delegation](#) and the Governance Charter.

The Local Governing Body will set the vision and strategic direction for the school so that it is appropriate for the context of the school and for the local community and includes implementing the vision of the Trust Board and its objectives. The Local Governing Body is the ears and eyes of the Trust in the community that the school serves and ensures that the education delivered is appropriate for that Community.

Each governor will familiarise themselves with the Scheme of Delegation and ensure that the Local Governing Body carries out its delegated functions as specified in the SoD.

2.2.1 Governors are responsible for

STRATEGIC DIRECTION: Ensuring the trust's and school's visions, values and ethos are realised.

Governors

- oversee the implementation of the Board's strategy as it applies to the school
- with the Headteacher, are responsible for developing the school's strategic plan
- with the Headteacher, oversee the development and regular updating of the school's Development/ Improvement Plan, based on accurate self-evaluation
- contribute to priorities, including the suitability of the staffing structure within the final budget and 3 year forecast
- understand and evaluate the impact of restricted funds
- ensure pupil premium/sports premium and catch-up funds are being spent appropriately
- review the opportunities for revenue generation

SAFEGUARDING & WELLBEING: Putting our pupils, staff and community at the heart of what we do.

Governors

- are responsible for knowing and understanding the school's own evaluation of the quality of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils
- monitor, support and challenge the welfare and child protection processes in the school including attendance, behaviour, serious disciplinary incidents and exclusions
- appoint a link governor to oversee the board's work on safeguarding

CHALLENGE & SUPPORT: Through monitoring, dialogue and stakeholder engagement

Governors

- support the school in its self-evaluation of significant strengths and weaknesses, including the school's own evaluation of the quality of teaching
- support and challenge the school in its programme of improvement
- are responsible for knowing, understanding and challenging the provisions that are in place to support pupils' progress and attainment, including for different groups of pupils
- challenge and advise the school in the development and implementation of its curriculum policy and, where appropriate, qualifications policy
- appoint link governors to have specific responsibility for pupils with Special Needs; pupils who attract Pupil Premium funding and Looked After Children and who report to the full LGB as appropriate

- in secondary schools, appoint a link governor with responsibility for Careers
- in primary schools, are responsible for monitoring the school's evaluation of the quality of EYFS provision
- are responsible for monitoring the school's links with and provision of information to parents, carers, guardians and the wider community
- ensure that regular surveys of staff, parents and children are carried out to determine their experiences and opinions and to discuss any actions taken by the school as a result of these

COMPLIANCE & EFFECTIVENESS: Ensuring adherence to trust, school and statutory policy and guidance.

Governors

- ensure adherence to the regular cycle of school policy reviews
- note trust wide policies and their implications for the school
- ensure compliance with Public Sector Equality Duty requirements for schools
- handle and monitor complaints
- understand the requirements of the inspection process, support the Headteacher and engage fully with that process when it happens
- with the designated trust lead, review GDPR compliance
- are responsible for knowing and understanding training requirements for safer recruitment, including for LGB members
- understand the training requirements for safer recruitment and support the Headteacher by joining appointment panels for senior leadership posts as required or otherwise by contributing to the process
- monitor, support and challenge the health and safety performance at the school
- monitor the impact of the strategic plan on the quality of the school's buildings, including developing priorities for capital expenditure and large scale 'minor works' in line with the strategic plan
- oversee risk management at the local level, including regular reviews of the school's risk register
- approve 'Type 2' educational visits

2.2.2 Other Governance Responsibilities

The CEO and central trust team work with the local governing body over the recruitment and appointment of the Headteacher.

Governors may be called upon at any time to serve as part of a panel to deal with:

- Complaints
- Permanent Exclusions
- Staffing issues such as grievance, discipline, ill health or capability

In each case, governors should be impartial and independent, following the appropriate academy or Trust policy.

The Trust has developed a pool of Governors who are appropriately trained and are able to assist with these panels across the academies. The Governance Advisor can assist in identifying additional governors should they be needed. It is good practice to ensure any such panels are appropriately clerked.

For matters relating to staff, the Trust HR team can provide further support and guidance. For complaints and exclusions, the executive team will provide support as appropriate.

In the event that the LGB has any concerns about a member of the executive team, the Chair should raise this with the CEO. If there is a concern about the Chief Executive, the chair should raise with the Chair of the Trust Board.

From September 2020, the new relationships education (primary) and relationships and sex education (secondary) curriculums are being introduced in all schools. Guidance suggests that Governing Bodies should appoint a link governor responsible for these curriculum areas.

2.3 Types of Governors

2.3.1 Parent Governors

¹Parents (including carers) of pupils at the academy, are eligible to stand for election as governors. Parent governors are elected by other parents at the academy. If insufficient parents stand for election, the governing body still has a duty to ensure that there are sufficient parent governors and may appoint parents.

2.3.2 Staff Governors

The Headteacher is a staff governor by virtue of their office. Other staff, both teaching and support, may become governors as long as they are paid (volunteers do not qualify). If there are more candidates than vacancies, staff governors are elected by the academy staff from a short-list of viable and appropriate candidates. Any election that is contested must be held by ballot.

2.3.3 Community Governors

Community governors are recommended for appointment by the trust governance advisor or local governing body. They are people who, in the opinion of the LGB, have the skills required to contribute to the effective governance and success of the school.

2.3.4 Foundation Governors (for denominational schools only)

Foundation governors are either appointed or take the role by virtue of an office that they hold. Where appointed, the appointment is made by the person identified in the Trust Articles of Association (usually the school's founding body, church or an organisation other than a local authority). A foundation governor is someone who, in the opinion of the person entitled to appoint them, has the skills to contribute to the effective governance and success of the school, and would be capable of achieving the purpose for which he/she is appointed which is securing:

- in all cases, that the school's character (including religious character where it has one) is preserved and developed and
- that the school (if it has a foundation) is conducted in accordance with the foundation's governing documents.

2.3.5 Associate Members

The Trust Board has approved the creation of Associate Members of Local Governing Bodies to contribute specifically on issues related to their expertise.

Associate Members are appointed for a term of two years and will serve no more than 3 terms consecutively. Associate Members have voting rights on panels/committees of the Local Governing Body but **not** at Local Governing Body

¹ For the purposes of education law, the department considers a 'parent' to include:

- all biological parents, whether they are married or not
- any person who, although not a biological parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person - this could be an adoptive parent, a step-parent, guardian or other relative
- any person who, although not a biological parent and does not have parental responsibility, has care of a child or young person

A person typically has care of a child or young person if they are the person with whom the child lives, either full or part time and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their biological or legal relationship is with the child.

meetings. They are eligible to Chair a panel or committee but do **not** have a deciding vote. Associate Members do not contribute towards a quorum of a Local Governing Body meeting should they attend.

Sharing of information with Associate Members will be determined at Academy level by the Headteacher and Chair of Governors with advice from the Trust Executive Team.

Associate members will sign the USP Code of Conduct and complete the declaration of pecuniary interests as the Trust requires.

2.4 Eligibility

Any person over the age of 18 is eligible to hold the role of governor.

However, in certain situations, a person is not eligible to hold the post of governor, including:

- If a governor is paid to work at the academy and is the subject of disciplinary proceedings in relation to his or her employment
- If a governor is the subject of proceedings in any court or tribunal, the outcome of which may be that the governor is disqualified from continuing to hold office due to bankruptcy, disqualification as a company director or other restrictions by law
- If a governor has acted in a way that is inconsistent with the ethos of the academy or trust and has brought or is likely to bring the academy or the governing body or the office of governor into disrepute
- If a governor is in breach of the duty of confidentiality to the academy or to any member of staff or pupil at the academy

A governor may also be removed from the governing body if they have failed to attend a meeting for 6 months without the consent of the governing body.

2.5. Term of Office

The Term of Office for all governors (except associate members²) is 4 years.

When a school joins the Trust, a governor may join the newly formed LGB with the agreement of the Trust Board and their term of office will be from when they started as a governor at their previous school.

A governor may serve for a shorter period if circumstances change and mean it is no longer possible to meet the commitments needed and so it becomes necessary to step down. The trust will remove any governor who does not abide by the code of conduct.

2.6 How Local Governing Bodies operate

2.6.1. Meetings of the Local Governing Body

The Local Governing Body shall meet at least once per term. The model currently favoured by the Trust is that LGBs meet 6 times a year, effectively half-termly. This reduces the need for committees and therefore the number of meetings governors and staff are expected to attend. More importantly, it means that all governors are involved at every level of discussion and decision making. Each Governing Body is professionally clerked, and the clerk notifies the Trust Governance Advisor of all dates of meetings so they can be entered on to the Trust calendar.

² Associate members are appointed for a two-year term in the first instance.

2.6.2 Clerking Arrangements, Agendas and Papers for Meetings

High quality clerking is crucial to the effectiveness of the LGB and the Trust buys in to the clerking service from Schools' Choice. The CEO and Governance Advisor meet with clerks termly to ensure a coherent approach across the Trust.

The Trust issues agenda templates for the 6 suggested meetings a year. These templates should be used by the Chair of Governors, Headteacher and Clerk to determine the business for each meeting. However, it is important that these templates work for each individual setting and they can be adjusted or amended accordingly. The Chair of Governors does need to ensure that statutory/trust requirements are met. The Clerk or the Governance Advisor can give further guidance.

2.6.3 Headteacher's Report

Governors should expect to receive a report from the Headteacher at least termly and regularly review the School Development Plan (or equivalent). There are further documents and items for discussion detailed in [Appendix 1](#) below.

The Headteachers' report should include information on:

- Attendance – including information on school target; attendance to date; persistent absence; authorised absence; unauthorised absence and late arrivals. Information should also be provided on the absence of vulnerable groups of pupils as appropriate.
- Outcomes – if not provided as a separate report
- Progress against school priorities – if not provided as a separate report
- Incidents – including notifiable accidents; e-safety; racist, gender or homophobic; radicalisation; bullying; formal parental complaints; Freedom of Information requests;
- Exclusions (fixed term and permanent) since September – including information on gender and vulnerable groups as appropriate
- Information on Looked After Children – including the number of LAC pupils
- School/pupil and staff achievements
- Staff training opportunities
- Staff changes
- Health and Safety and Premises issues – if not provided as a separate report

This is not an exhaustive list and governors should agree the structure of the report with the Headteacher to ensure they receive information in the most accessible and useful format.

Other regular agenda items should include Safeguarding, SEND, Pupil Premium, Sports Premium and Year 7 catchup funding.

2.6.4 Governor Hub

The Trust uses Governor Hub as the method of sharing documentation for meetings. It also serves as a resource base for Trust and wider information about governance. (Further information on the use of Governor Hub is provided in the induction pack for new governors). Governors need to consider GDPR implications in all their correspondence and e-mails. It is recommended practice that governors use a school e-mail address.

2.6.5 Meeting Notification

The Governors will receive notice and papers for the next LGB meeting 7 clear days before the date of the meeting. Governors should read all papers in advance of the meeting and prepare any questions they may

have – this preparation really does help the meeting to move forward. Some LGBs have agreed with the Headteacher to send questions in advance of the meeting so that a fuller discussion can be achieved within the timeframe. Questions obviously need to be pertinent to the documents provided.

Minutes will be signed by the Local Governing Body Chair at the next meeting to verify that the minutes are a true record.

2.6.6 Quorum

The quorum for a meeting of the Local Governing Body will be over half the number of current serving governors rounded up as required, ie. 9 members - quorum of 5, 8 members – quorum of 5.

Should a vote on any issue be required (generally this is unusual) the outcome shall be determined by a majority of votes of Governors present and eligible to vote on the proposal.

Meetings are not expected to last longer than two hours.

Should the Chair or Vice-Chair not be available for a meeting, another member of the LGB (other than the Head or Staff Governor) may take the position for that meeting to enable it to go ahead.

Any changes to LGB membership are notified by the Clerk to the Trust Governance Advisor so appropriate changes to the constitution can be recorded.

2.6.7 Local Governing Body Chair and Vice Chair

The Chair and Vice Chair of the LGB, will normally be elected from within the members of the governing body. The Headteacher and staff governor are not eligible to stand for these roles. The term of office for Chair and Vice-Chair will be 1 year. The Trust Board has the right to remove the Chair and Vice-Chair.

Elections for Chair and Vice-Chair will usually take place at the first meeting of the year by a ballot, conducted by the Clerk. Nominations should be given to the Clerk (preferably by e-mail) prior to the meeting. A governor can nominate him/herself for office and does not need to be present at the meeting. Nominee(s) will be asked to leave the room whilst the election takes place. If there is more than one nominee, the remaining Governors will take a vote by secret ballot and the Clerk will tally the vote.

If, in the unlikely event, there are more than three nominees per office, the nominee polling the least votes shall be eliminated and a further vote taken. If there is a tie the Governors shall discuss the strengths of nominees and a further vote taken. This process will continue until a nominee polls a majority of votes.

In the event of a Chair stepping down before their term of office ends, the Vice Chair will take the role of Chair for the next meeting. Nominations should be requested prior to the that meeting so a vote on a new Chair can take place.

Any newly elected Chair will be invited to meet with the CEO as part of the support offered by the Trust.

2.6.8 Succession Planning

Succession planning will be on the Agenda for the summer term meeting and governors should have open discussions about what's best for their setting. Consideration should be given to rotating the Chair after a period of time to enable to LGB to keep developing.

2.7. LGB Committees/Working Groups

The Local Governing Body may form subcommittees or working groups to assist in fulfilling its responsibilities. However, as discussed in [Section 2.6.1](#), many LGBs within the Trust have moved away from formal committees.

The difference between sub-committees and working groups is their decision-making responsibility.

Subcommittees can make decisions on behalf of the LGB on issues within the committee's remit as set out by the Terms of Reference. Working groups are not able to make decisions but can make recommendations to the LGB for ratification.

The Local Governing Body will be able to invite non-Governors to serve on Working Groups or subcommittees, subject to the approval of the Trust Board.

The Local Governing Body will set out subcommittee/working group Terms of Reference and membership, to be agreed and reviewed at the first meeting of the Local Governing Body each academic year. (For model terms of reference for Curriculum and Standards Committee and Resources Committee see [Appendix 2](#) and [Appendix 3](#))

The practice for working group and subcommittee management shall be;

- Agendas will be circulated to all committee/group members at least seven days in advance of the meeting.
- Committee/working group papers and minutes will be available to all Governors (not just those on the committee/group).

2.8 Governor Expenses

The Trust Board shall set out a policy for payment of expenses incurred by Governors in the course of their duties, subject to prior application and approval by the Chair of the Local Governing Body. Please refer to the Trust Finance Policy for further information

2.9. Ensuring Effective Governance

2.9.1 Induction

The Trust Board approve recommendations of all new governors at each Board meeting. Prospective governors may attend meetings whilst waiting for formal approval of their appointment. All new Governors will be invited to meet with the CEO of the Trust by way of welcome and support.

On appointment the Trust Governance Advisor will send new Governors an electronic induction pack and they are required to familiarise themselves and to agree to comply with;

- USP Code of Conduct ([Appendix 4](#))
- USP Guidance to Governors
- USP Scheme of Delegation
- Current relevant legislation and guidance for Governors

Governors are required annually to read Section 2 of Keeping Children Safe in Education³ and complete a USP Pecuniary Interests form.

Governors are also required to undertake Safeguarding Training for Governors within the first year of their term of office. This is a specific requirement of the Trust's Safeguarding Policy. Training is available via [the Schools Choice training link](#).

2.9.2 Training

Our induction training aims to provide all governors with a clear understanding of what good governance means to the trust and how governors can fulfil this important role. It is run periodically, and all governors should attend this within their first year. Training opportunities are notified via Governor Hub.

³ For further information on KCSIE and safeguarding training requirements please see the [Safeguarding section](#) of this guidance

The Trust also buys into Schools' Choice governor training sessions and recommends that governors maximise their take up of individual training to get best value for money for the trust. Schools' Choice termly briefings are also offered at various locations across the area. Individual training can be booked directly through the Schools' Choice section on Governor Hub. ([governorhub/schoolschoice training](https://governorhub/schoolschoice/training))

Each Governing Body is also entitled to a Whole Governing Body (WGB) session provided by Schools' Choice. There are a variety of sessions on offer or bespoke training may be available – for further information, please check with the Governance Advisor. LGB Clerks are also able to offer additional advice on Training. Cross trust training is also offered throughout the year and open to any LGB governor.

All governors are also able to sign up to the National Governors' Association (NGA) Learning Link which provides high quality on-line training modules. Governors can register for the on Learning Link [here](#).

Is it strongly recommended that Chairs of Governors undertake the Department for Education funded [Governance Leadership Development Programme](#). There are several providers for this course so please contact the Governance Advisor for further information.

2.9.3 Assessing Governor Skills

The [Academies Financial Handbook](#) requires all academy trusts to identify and fill any skills gaps through recruitment or training. This should be undertaken regularly, at least biennially.

The Skills Audit developed by the Trust is based on the USP Scheme of Delegation and the DFE Competency Framework. However, no individual will have all the skills listed. The governing body is a team, and the purpose of the audit is to ensure that each of the skills is covered by at least one of the governors around the table. The experience and skills within the audit may come from either governors' professional or personal lives.

When considering the skills listed, it is important to understand that governance is a 'thinking' not a 'doing' role – strategic not operational. This means that the skills and knowledge sought are those which enable governors to ask the right questions, analyse data and have focussed discussions which create robust accountability for academy leaders. For example, a governor might work in the construction industry, but it would not be appropriate for them to carry out a health and safety check at the academy. However, given their knowledge it may be appropriate for them to be a link governor with the responsibility to ensure that health and safety requirements are carried out. Similarly, a lawyer should not be asked to give free legal advice. Governance is a strategic role and governors must not be tempted to do the staff's job -management is the job of the academy leadership team.

The Trust Governance Advisor can assist with the process of auditing the skills of governors.

2.9.4 Interim Governing Bodies

When a school first joins the trust or in exceptional circumstances where governance is considered to be at risk of failing in its responsibilities as set out in this document, the trust may initiate an Interim Governing Body. The purpose of the IGB is to provide interim expertise and high-quality governance to support future improvement, including the promotion of high standards of educational achievement. The Interim Board may be chaired by a member of the Central Executive Team and as well as fulfilling the responsibilities of an LGB, will specifically work towards recruiting and training local governors to form an LGB. The Interim Governing Body will be established for two terms in the first instance, with an option to extend on a termly basis until a fully functioning LGB can be established. The Trust Board will keep these arrangements under review.

2.9.5 Governor Monitoring

Monitoring visits can be one of the most daunting aspects of governance so it's important all those involved understand the reason, purpose and focus of these visits. Governor training on Monitoring is available through the Trust as well as Schools' Choice.

Some LGBs within the Trust have moved towards a model of termly, whole governing monitoring sessions. If you would like further information on how this might work, please contact the Governance Advisor.

Not all monitoring has to take place during school hours and whilst it is helpful in getting to know the school it is not always feasible for working governors to visit during the day. There are other ways in which governors can assist in monitoring activities ie. website audit.

There is further information about Monitoring in the [USP Resources Section](#) of Governor Hub

Governing visits should be planned by the LGB to cover a wide range of activities and but most of these should be linked to the School Improvement Plan or equivalent document.

Visits enable Governors to:

- see the school at work and observe the range of attitudes, behaviour and achievements
- get to know the staff and demonstrate their commitment to the school
- be aware of the effect of strategic change and different approaches to teaching and learning
- gain first-hand information to assist with policy making and decision taking
- work in partnership with the staff

Visits should:

- improve governors' knowledge of the academy and the people that work in it
- assist a governor to fulfil a specialist governor link role such as inclusion or safeguarding
- assist the LGB in fulfilling its statutory duties
- assist governors in making informed decisions
- inform the LGB in understanding school improvement and confirm information being provided to the board.

Before making a visit, Governors should contact the Headteacher or lead staff member to agree a date, time and focus for the visit. Plan your visit in advance and agree which classes you might want to visit and which staff (and pupils) you may want to talk to. Plan which classes will be visited or who you're going to speak to, read any relevant papers or policies, draft some questions of lines of enquiry.

On the day of the visit Governors should try to arrive on time and clarify the timetable with the Head or staff member leading the visit. When visiting classrooms, respect the professionalism of the teacher, act as an observer and don't interrupt lessons unless invited to talk to pupils or adults. If you can, acknowledge the teacher and say thank you before leaving the classroom.

After the visit the Governor should meet with the Head or lead teacher to give some verbal feedback and thank them for their welcome. Complete the Governor Visit Proforma, reporting on the focus, within a week of your visit. The completed form should be sent to the lead staff member or Headteacher to confirm the findings and then the report should be uploaded to Governor Hub for circulation with the rest of the LGB. Governors should try to report without giving opinions and where possible individuals should not be identified. (See [Appendix 5](#) for an example pro-forma) There is no point in undertaking Governor visits if the resulting report just sits in a file in the school office. Reports should be circulated and read prior to an LGB meeting so that they can be discussed, and any questions answered.

It is important to remember that visits are a snapshot in time, and judgements should not be arbitrary. The visit is not about inspection, making judgements about the professional expertise of the teacher, checking on your own children, pursuing a personal agenda or arriving with inflexible pre-conceived ideas.

Governors also need to be mindful of confidentiality issues and will not discuss the monitoring activities outside the governing body.

Governors are an important part of the school team and are welcomed into the school by staff. It is important that Governors remember to respect the professionals and the children, support the Headteacher and the staff, and acknowledge that they represent the full LGB. If the agreed principles and procedures are followed then visits will be an enjoyable, positive and beneficial experience for all involved and will contribute to school improvement.

2.9.6 Link Governors

The role of the Link Governor is to act as the governor who has an overview of a specific area within the school. As the name suggests, they act as the link between the school and the Local Governing Body and report back to the LGB on their area of responsibility. This is a strategic role and governors should not get involved in policy or working with pupils.

In line with the Scheme of Delegation, LGBs must appoint link governors for the following areas; Safeguarding, SEND, Looked After Children (LAC), Pupil Premium Funding and, for secondary schools, Careers. In addition, link governors may also be appointed to oversee specific areas of responsibility that are linked either to the School Development/Improvement Plan or other key priority, ie. behaviour, reading, EYFS.

Governors should familiarise themselves with relevant school or trust documents ie. policies and strategies and with any DFE guidance of legal responsibilities for their area of responsibility.

Please see [Appendix 6](#) for examples of questions Link Governors may wish to ask. Further information and training is available through the Trust Governance Advisor.)

2.10 Governor Behaviours

2.10.1 Nolan Principles

In 1994, the Government Committee on Standard in Public Life published 7 principles. These “Nolan principles” (named after the Chair of the Committee) are still considered to embody an ethical code expected of all who serve in the public sector be them employees or volunteers. The Trust requires governors to uphold these principles:

- **Selflessness:** Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other benefits for themselves, their family or their friends.
- **Integrity:** Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their official duties.
- **Objectivity:** 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 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.

2.10.2 Pecuniary and Other Interests

As a trust, it is essential that there is full confidence that governors and board members are putting Academy and Trust interests first and are not gaining financially or personally in any way from holding a position of such responsibility.

Conflicts of interest cannot be eradicated so it is important to manage them in an open, honest and transparent way. Governors achieve this through the Code of Conduct, provided and a Register of Interests that is reviewed annually and published on the academy’s website, and through disclosure of interests at every meeting.

Every governor and director is required to complete a Form of Pecuniary and Other Interests. It is the responsibility of the LGB to ensure the Register of Interests is reviewed and updated annually and held as a central register, and that is published on the academy’s website.

The Pecuniary and Other Interests form requires governors to declare all interests. Following recent advice from the trust auditors, relevant interests will be published on the academy website. Further guidance is given on the form to help governors determine what are relevant and non-relevant interests. Chairs of Governors are required to counter-sign the governor forms, the Chair of Governor’s form will be counter signed by the Director of Finance.

2.10.3. Pecuniary Interest

A pecuniary interest is an interest in a business or organisation (for example your employer, trade, profession, contract, or any company with which you are associated) or a wider financial interest that you might have (for example trust funds, investments, and assets including land and property).

You have a disclosable pecuniary interest if any of the following apply to you, your spouse or civil partner.

- Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried out for profit or gain, which you, or your spouse or civil partner, undertakes.
- Any contract which is made between you, or your spouse or your civil partner (or a body in which you, or your spouse or your civil partner, has a beneficial interest) and the trust:
 - under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and
 - which has not been fully discharged.
- Any beneficial interest in land or other assets which you, or your spouse or your civil partner, have and which has the potential to be of interest to the trust.

When disclosing a pecuniary interest, the name and details of the spouse or civil partner does not need to be disclosed because it is *your* interest by association.

2.10.4 Other Interests

Other interests are defined as those which could affect your judgement and objectivity when discussing academy or trust matters. These are interests that may not apply to all meetings and business but depend upon the content and agenda. These could include (and are neither exclusive nor exhaustive):

- A family relationship.
- An active interest in another school, academy or trust.

2.10.5 Conflict of Interests.

Whilst Governors are expected to leave personal issues outside the governing body and LGBs should not be discussing the day to day management of the school, on rare occasions, issues may arise that could result in a conflict of interest for individual governors. For example, a member of the LGB is related to a member of staff and the staffing structure of the school may be under review. The risk of such a conflict should be managed by the Chair and if he or she feels it appropriate, the member of the LGB can be asked to leave for that particular discussion. Parent Governors bring their perspective as a parent but have to avoid using the LGB as a forum to discuss or raise matters relating to their children.

You should declare your interest at meetings where it is considered relevant. If in doubt, it is better to disclose a potential interest than not.

2.10.6 Failure to Register or Disclose an Interest

The trust board may decide to suspend or remove from office any individual or group of individuals who do not follow these guidelines.

3. SAFEGUARDING AND LGB RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 USP Trust Safeguarding Policy.

“The trust believes in supporting all aspects of children and young people’s development and learning and keeping children safe. We understand that emotional and social aspects of learning create a foundation for all academic learning. If a child has not been supported to understand, express and resolve their feelings, they may not have the ability to share with other children, resolve the small conflicts that arise in day-to-day classroom life, or concentrate on learning. Their frustrations may cause a range of antisocial, disruptive, overly compliant or withdrawn behaviours. All staff who work at the trust will ensure that:

- Children and young people are listened to, valued and respected
- Staff are aware of indicators of abuse and know how to share their concerns appropriately
- All paid and unpaid staff are subject to rigorous recruitment procedures
- All paid and unpaid staff are given appropriate support and training”

Each school also has its own Child Protection Procedures and governors should familiarise themselves with these. These procedures are reviewed annually.

A link governor will be appointed by each LGB and they are required to undertake the “Named Governor Safeguarding Training” provided by Schools’ Choice. However, Safeguarding is the responsibility of everyone involved in the school and should be the “golden thread” of the school’s culture.

3.2 LGB Safeguarding Responsibilities

The Trust Safeguarding Policy states

“The local governing body will hold the headteacher to account for its implementation and the implementation of the school’s child protection procedures. The local governing body will appoint a named safeguarding governor to monitor the effectiveness of this policy in conjunction with the full local governing body. This is always a different person from the DSL. The relevant trust director of education will act as the ‘case manager’ in the event that an allegation of abuse is made against the headteacher, where appropriate.” The safeguarding governor will work with the DSL to ensure that a section 175/157 safeguarding audit is completed, in line with the requirements of the local safeguarding partnership

3.3 DBS Checks and Training Requirements

All trustees and local governors will have an enhanced DBS check without barred list information. They will have an enhanced DBS check with barred list information if working in regulated activity.

All governors must access safeguarding/child protection training, that includes online safety, specifically for governors, within the first year of their term of office and every three years after that. A record of this must be kept within the school. This will be monitored by the trust as part of the annual safeguarding review. (Please see [section 2.8.2](#) for a link to training opportunities)

4. SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND LGB RESPONSIBILITIES

The Trust’s ambition is “that every leader is a leader of SEND”. Therefore, there is a responsibility for all governors to understand the context and provision of Special Needs Education within their setting.

Schools must:

- Use their best endeavours to make sure that a child with SEND gets the support they need – this means doing everything they can to meet children and young people’s SEND.
- Ensure that children and young people with SEND engage in the activities of the school alongside pupils who do not have SEND.

- Designate a teacher to be responsible for co-ordinating SEND provision – the SEND co-ordinator, or SENCO (this does not apply to 16 to 19 academies).
- Inform parents when they are making special educational provision for a child.
- Prepare an SEN information report and their arrangements for the admission of disabled children, the steps being taken to prevent disabled children from being treated less favourably than others, the facilities provided to enable access to the school for disabled children and their accessibility plan showing how they plan to improve access progressively over time.

4.1 Regard to the SEND Code of Practice

Governing Bodies must have regard to the [Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years 2015](#). This means that whenever LGBs are taking decisions, they must give consideration to what the code says. They must fulfil their statutory duties towards children and young people with SEND or disabilities in light of the guidance set out. They must be able to demonstrate in their arrangements for children and young people with SEND or disabilities that they are fulfilling their statutory duty to have regard to the code.

Where the Code of Practice uses the word 'should' it means that the guidance contained in the code **must** be considered and that the Governing Body will need to explain any departure from it.

WHOLE GOVERNING BODY RESPONSIBILITY UNDER THE CODE

- Ensure provision is made for any pupil who has SEND
- Ensure the school produces and publishes online its SEN Information report. (Para 6.79 of the SEND Code of Practice details what needs to be in the report).
- Ensure there are arrangements in place to support children with medical conditions
- Ensure the school is co-operating with the LA in developing the local offer
- Ensure that a qualified teacher is the designated SENCO
- Monitor SEND provision and ensure that children with SEND are able to access the everyday activities of the school as far as this is compatible with their receiving the necessary provision
- Ensure that provision is made in the budget to meet the needs of children with SEND

5. OFSTED

In September 2019, the new Ofsted framework came into force and there are a number of key changes to the previous version. These include:

- A single 'quality of education' judgement which replaces the existing 'quality of teaching, learning and assessment' and 'outcomes for pupils' categories. Inspectors will consider whether the school offers a "broad and rich learning experience" which gives all learners – particularly the most disadvantaged or those with special educational needs and /or disabilities (SEND) – access to the knowledge and cultural capital they need to fulfil their potential. Pupil attainment will be assessed in the context of the school and inspectors will also consider whether schools are narrowing the curriculum or 'teaching to the test'.
- The current judgement for 'personal development, behaviour and welfare' is split in to two separate categories – 'behaviour and attitudes' and 'personal development'. Inspectors will consider how the school sets high expectations for learners' behaviour and conduct, including how bullying is managed.
- To allow inspectors' sufficient time to gather evidence during section 8 inspections (currently a one day 'short' inspection of good and non-exempt outstanding schools), the time inspectors' spend on site will be extended to two days or the majority of schools, apart from small schools (150 pupils or fewer on roll) where inspection will remain at one day.

- Inspectors will not use internal data as evidence during inspection. Ofsted have clarified that inspectors “will be interested in the conclusions drawn and actions taken from any internal assessment information, but they will not examine or verify that information first-hand”. National performance data will continue to be used as a starting point on inspection.
- Ofsted will enhance inspectors’ off-site preparation and contact with the school by introducing “a 90-minute phone call between the lead inspector and the headteacher (or their nominated delegate) on the afternoon before inspection begins.”

Ofsted have produced a number of [short videos](#) to explain how inspections will be carried out and what inspectors will be looking for. Ofsted Preparation training for Governors is also available through the Schools Choice training programme and the Trust will share training opportunities as they arise.

Under the new framework, Inspectors are keen to meet with as many governors as possible during the inspection. governors are also invited to the feedback meeting. The final report is written mainly for parents and the wider public and does not go into the same amount of detail as previously, consequently, governors are also invited to the feedback meeting where inspectors give detailed feedback on strengths, areas for improvement and next steps.

Samples questions that LGBs (including those in the Trust) have been asked since the new framework came in to force can be found in [Appendix 7](#).

6. FURTHER SUPPORT, INFORMATION AND WHO'S WHO

6.1 Support

The trust will always be the principal source of support for governors and governing bodies. The Governance Advisor can be contacted on bpoynter@unitysp.co.uk

The Trust also provides

- Guidance, including this handbook and governor briefing notes
- Termly briefing for Chairs
- An induction pack for new Governors
- A dedicated governor login area; Governor Hub. (See Section 6.2)
- Support and answers to questions as required
- Cross Trust training sessions through the year
- Governors' Annual Conference
- Governance review and audits

6.2 Sources of Information

Governor Hub. As mentioned in 2.6.4, we use Governor Hub as the primary source of sharing papers for meetings but it also a valuable resource where governors can access resources and information on; training opportunities, briefing notes, trust policies, model policies and templates, parental and staff election procedures, guidance on governor recruitment and updates on national educational issues.

Schools Choice produces a monthly newsletters for governors called [The Knowledge](#) which can be viewed on Governor Hub or via e-mail. It provides regular up-dates on all aspects of governance.

The Department for Education has a governance section at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/departmental-advice-schools#governance>

and the DfE Governor Handbook can be downloaded here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/governance-handbook>

Andrew Hall provides a weekly [safeguarding update](#) which is particularly useful for named Safeguarding governors. Click on the link to sign up to receive this directly to your in-box.

[The Education Endowment Foundation](#) (EEF) is dedicated to breaking the link between family income and educational achievement and has a wealth of information and research-based guidance.

[Ofsted Education Inspection Framework](#) – this document sets out Ofsted's inspection principles and the main judgements that inspectors make.

[Ofsted School Inspection Handbook](#) – Guidance on inspecting maintained schools and academies in England.

[Ofsted Early years Inspection Handbook](#) – guidance on inspecting registered early years and childcare providers.

[Ofsted You Tube Channel](#) – includes videos on the new Ofsted framework, research and reports undertaken by Ofsted and specific topics such as SEND, Pupil Premium and Early Years.

[Schools' Choice Training Brochure](#) – use to book on to training courses and see what is available to arrange as a whole Governing Body training session.

[National Governors Association Learning Link](#) – all governors can sign up to this on-line training platform.

6.3 Who's Who



Tim Coulson -
CEO



Lisa Taylor –
Trust Secretary



Darren Woodward –
Director of Education (Primary)



Debbie Willson –
Director of Operations



Stephen Astley –
Director of Education (Primary)



Andy Samways –
Director of Teaching School &
Director of the Research School



Rosemary Prince –
Director of Education (Secondary)



Steve Watts –
Trust Safeguarding and GDPR Lead



Sarah Garner –
Director of Finance and HR



Becky Poynter –
Senior Governance Advisor

6.4 Contact Information

Unity SP Offices, Park Road,
Haverhill, Suffolk, CB9 7YD

Tel: 01440 333400

Becky Poynter – Senior Governance Advisor

Tel 07889 501636 e-mail: bpoynter@unitysp.co.uk



@GovsUnity

(as of January 2020)

Further Documents and Issues for Consideration by Local Governing Bodies

- School Development Plan (or equivalent)
- Discuss and contribute to draft and final Budget proposals
- Receive school data reports, including analysis of national testing.
- Receive and monitor academic targets
- Receive and discuss SEF annual update
- Receive and discuss Trust Annual Review
- Receive and discuss annual Safeguarding Report from Headteacher
- Receive and discuss Trust Annual Safeguarding Review
- Receive reports (verbal or written) of TATS (team around the school) meetings
- Receive External Health & Safety reports/audits
- Receive annual SEND report
- SEND School on a page and “Nutshell” reports
- Update published information on how the school is complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty and its equality objectives
- Ensure appropriate arrangements are in place for staff performance management (including that of the Headteacher)
- Receive report on anonymised performance management targets to ensure relevant to school priorities.
- Consider and approve school policies in line with local policy schedule
- Note Trust policies as issued

USP Model Terms of Reference: Curriculum and Standards Committee

Terms of reference for the Curriculum and Standards Committee

General Terms

- To act on matters delegated by the local governing body.
- To liaise and consult with other committees where necessary.
- To contribute to the School/Academy Improvement Plan.
- To consider safeguarding and equalities implications when undertaking all committee functions.

Quorum

- Committees are free to determine their own quorum, but as a minimum this must be not less than three governor members of the committee.

Meetings

- Governing bodies are free to determine how often their committees meet – this may be left to the discretion of the individual committees and may depend on the circumstances of the school at any given time.
- Committee meetings will not be open to the public, but minutes shall be made available. Information relating to a named person or any other matter that the committee considers confidential does not have to be made available for inspection.
- In the absence of the chair, the committee shall choose an acting chair for that meeting from among their number.
- In the absence of the clerk the committee shall choose a clerk for that meeting from among their number (someone who is not the headteacher/principal).
- The draft minutes of each meeting will be circulated with the agenda for the next ordinary meeting of the full governing body and will be presented at that meeting by the chair (or in his/her absence another member of the committee).
- Any decisions taken must be determined by a majority of votes of committee members present and voting – but no vote can be taken unless a majority of those present are governors.

The Curriculum Committee can have the following delegated responsibilities

- support the school in its self-evaluation of significant strengths and weaknesses
- know, understand and challenge the school's response to the recommendations of its last inspection
- know, understand and challenge pupils' overall progress and attainment
- know, understand and challenge the progress and attainment of different groups of pupils (including but not limited to pupil premium and others facing financial disadvantage, special educational needs and disability, looked after children, different ethnic groups with English as an Additional Language, most able pupils, differing ability cohorts)
- ensure adherence to a regular cycle of school curriculum policy review
- know and understand the school's own evaluation of the quality of its curricular and co-curricular provision
- challenge and advise the school in the development and implementation of its curriculum policy and, where appropriate, qualifications policy
- support, challenge and advise the school in the development and implementation of its co-curricular provision
- ensure that practice within the school reflects most up-to-date curriculum policy documents
- monitor the effectiveness of professional development, talent management and succession planning
- in primary schools, monitor the school's evaluation of the quality of EYFS provision

USP Model Terms of Reference: Resources Committee

Terms of reference for the Resources Committee

General Terms

- To act on matters delegated by the local governing body.
- To liaise and consult with other committees where necessary.
- To contribute to the School/Academy Improvement Plan.
- To consider safeguarding and equalities implications when undertaking all committee functions.

Quorum

- Committees are free to determine their own quorum, but as a minimum this must be not less than three governor members of the committee.

Meetings

- Governing bodies are free to determine how often their committees meet – this may be left to the discretion of the individual committees and may depend on the circumstances of the school at any given time.
- Committee meetings will not be open to the public, but minutes shall be made available. Information relating to a named person or any other matter that the committee considers confidential does not have to be made available for inspection.
- In the absence of the chair, the committee shall choose an acting chair for that meeting from among their number.
- In the absence of the clerk the committee shall choose a clerk for that meeting from among their number (someone who is not the headteacher/principal).
- The draft minutes of each meeting will be circulated with the agenda for the next ordinary meeting of the full governing body and will be presented at that meeting by the chair (or in his/her absence another member of the committee).
- Any decisions taken must be determined by a majority of votes of committee members present and voting – but no vote can be taken unless a majority of those present are governors.

The Resources Committee can have the following delegated responsibilities

Finance

- receives summary management accounts monthly from the central team to ensure the LGB is fully aware of the school's financial performance
- challenges the school where there are variances to budget and the 3 year forecast
- contributes to priorities, including the suitability of the staffing structure within the final budget and 3 year forecast
- receives the draft budget and ensures it addresses and meets the needs of the academy, within the financial principles of the Trust
- understands and evaluates the impact of restricted funds.
- ensures pupil premium/sports premium and catch-up funds are being spent appropriately.
- reviews the opportunities for revenue generation

Buildings and Maintenance and Health and Safety

- monitors the impact of the strategic plan on the quality of the school's buildings
- with the Headteacher, develops priorities for capital expenditure and large scale 'minor works' in line with the strategic plan.
- Appoints, if appropriate, a Governor to have specific responsibility for health and safety in the school who reports to the full LGB
- monitors, supports and challenges the health and safety performance at the school

Staffing

- supports the Headteacher by joining appointment panels for senior leadership posts (and for posts below Deputy Headteacher when invited to do so) or otherwise contributing to the appointment process
- stays fully aware of the school's activity in terms of its staff, staffing structures and more general HR data, and can support and challenge appropriately, using key performance data provided by the school and Central Office
- is responsible for knowing and understanding the training requirements for safer recruitment including LGB members' training if taking part in recruitment processes.
- supports the Headteacher with any staff restructure plans
- monitors staff exit interviews

USP Governors' Code of Conduct

The Unity Schools Partnership Governance Charter.

The Local Governing Body supports the Trust Board in its three core functions of governance as outlined in the Scheme of Delegation. At a local level the Local Governing Body has a vital role in driving school improvement through the USP Governance Charter.

SAFEGUARDING AND WELLBEING: Putting our pupils, staff and community at the heart of what we do.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION: Ensuring the trust's and school's vision, values and ethos are realised.

CHALLENGE AND SUPPORT: Through monitoring, dialogue and stakeholder engagement.

COMPLIANCE AND EFFECTIVENESS: Ensuring adherence to the trust, school and statutory policy guidance

GOVERNORS' CODE OF CONDUCT

- We accept collective responsibility.
- We act fairly, appropriately and without prejudice.
- We accept that we have no legal authority to act individually, except when the governing body has given us delegated authority to do so, and therefore we will only speak on behalf of the local governing body when we have been specifically authorised to do so.
- We accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the governing body or its delegated agents. This means that we will not speak against majority decisions outside the governing body meeting.
- We consider carefully how our decisions may affect the school, trust and the wider community.
- We are mindful of our responsibility to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of our academy and the Unity Schools Partnership
- We will look to attend all meetings and where we cannot attend explain in advance in full why we are unable to.
- We will strive to work as a team in which constructive working relationships are actively promoted.
- We will express views openly, courteously and respectfully
- We will observe confidentiality when matters are deemed confidential or where they concern specific members of the governing body, staff, pupils, or parents, from any academy within the Unity Schools Partnership.
- We will record all pecuniary interest that we have in connection with the governing body's business in the Register of Interests.
- We will declare all pecuniary and other interests in a matter under discussion at a meeting and offer to leave the meeting for the appropriate length of time

USP Example Governor Visit Proforma

<Insert Academy Logo>



<Insert name> Academy

GOVERNOR VISIT REPORT

Name:	Gov. Responsibility:	Date:
Staff / class visited:		
Information gathered from: (please tick as appropriate)		
Attending an assembly	<input type="checkbox"/>	Meeting with the subject co-ordinator
Looking at children's work on display or in their books	<input type="checkbox"/>	Meeting with SENCO
Talking to children about their work	<input type="checkbox"/>	Looking at resources
Talking to teaching staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	Looking at the buildings, décor and contents
Talking to non-teaching staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	Climate Walk
Attending playtime or lunchtime	<input type="checkbox"/>	Attending a staff meeting
Meeting with the Headteacher	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other
Objectives of Visit / Focus (eg Ofsted Objectives / Key Issue/Development are on SDP / Termly Plan):		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 		
Brief notes / Points relevant to objectives:		

Evidence of School Values/British Values/Spiritual, Moral, Social & Cultural (SMSC) <i>(Academies to amend as appropriate)</i>	
British Values:	Academy Values:
Positive Learning Behaviours	SMSC
Please briefly outline the context	
Up to three positive comments relevant to the visit focus	
1.	
2.	
3.	
Points to take forward for discussion at the Governing Body Meeting:	
Received and discussed with the Headteacher	
Date:	
Received by the Local Governing Body	
Date:	
Follow up action as a result of this visit:	

USP Example Questions for Link Governors

Governors have an important strategic role to play in asking questions to both challenge and support senior leaders. Appropriate, focused questions not only enable governors to get to know the school and its community but to also confirm information provided by the Head and other school leaders. However, the questions should be the starting point for a dialogue with colleagues in school not as a test of staff or a list for the Headteacher to respond to.

For further information monitoring and link governance please look at Governor Hub or contact the Trust Governance Advisor.

CURRICULUM

- What are the key curriculum drivers in our school?
- Does our curriculum flow from the ethos, vision and values of our school?
- How do we ensure our pupils receive a broad and balanced education?
- How do we know the curriculum meets the needs of ALL our pupils? Are we sure it is not narrowed for any group?
- How do we ensure our students develop the skills and attitudes they need to flourish in and out of school?
- Does our curriculum promote pupils' spiritual moral social and cultural development?
- What do our assessments tell us? Do they just tell us about attainment and progress, or do we receive information about the skills, values and personal qualities our pupils have developed?
- How are parents engaged?
- What do the pupils tell us about their curriculum? Are they excited by it?
- How does the school use its partnerships with other schools, local businesses, the local community to enhance the curriculum?
- How do we know our assessment systems are robust? Do they accurately measure progress? Are all teachers using it consistently?

PUPIL PREMIUM

- What would you say are the main barriers to learning for pupil premium pupils and how is the school working to overcome them?
- How is the allocation of the pupil premium decided?
- What are the priorities in this year's pupil premium strategy?
- Is the school working towards a pupil premium strategy?
- How effective has the previous strategy been in improving the outcomes for vulnerable learners?
- How does the attainment of pupil premium pupils as a group compare with others?

CAREERS (Secondary school)

- How does your school develop, manage and implement its careers programme?
- How does your school provide opportunities for pupils to learn from careers and labour market information?
- How does your school address the career guidance needs of each pupil?
- How do teaching staff in your school link curriculum learning to careers?
- How does your school ensure that pupils have encounters with employers and employees which enrich their understanding of working practices?
- How does your school ensure that pupils receive relevant experiences of work places to help them to make career decisions?
- How does your school ensure that all pupils people participate in relevant encounters with further and higher education and work-based learning provides to help them make career decisions about further learning options?
- How does your school ensure that all pupils have access to the personal guidance they require to help them make informed career decisions?

BEHAVIOUR

Culture & Expectations:

- Is this a happy school with a positive learning culture?
- How is good behaviour rewarded? And how often?
- How are pupils, parents and staff made aware of the school behaviour policy
 - What measures are in place to ensure good behaviour, discipline and respect is communicated to pupils?
 - Are staff clear about the school's behaviour policy and the extent of their disciplinary authority/powers?
- What steps do we take to inform parents about how they are expected to behave while on school premises?
- What impact does the behaviour policy have on classroom practice – how do you know?
- How do you monitor whether the behaviour policy is being applied consistently across the school?
- How do you assess/monitor pupils' attitudes to learning?
- How do you deal with cyber bullying?
- What measures are in place to deal with persistent poor behaviour? E.g. systems to identify and address the needs of pupils who continuously display disruptive behaviour.
- How do you deal with poor behaviour that takes place beyond the school gate?

Information:

- What information do you have about
 - the levels of attendance,
 - incidents of bullying (including cyber-bullying and homophobic bullying),
 - levels of poor behaviour?
- How many pupils have been excluded (fixed term and permanently) in the last term/year/three years?
- How many managed moves have taken place this term/year?

Procedures and Support

- Does the school have links with other schools in relation to behaviour initiatives?
- Do you/the staff know the root causes of poor behaviour?
- What external support do the staff have for dealing with any behaviour issues?
- Have all staff received appropriate training in relation to dealing with aggressive pupils where restraint may be required?
- What steps have you taken to inform/educate parents about the potential pitfalls of social media, for example, cyber-bullying, 'grooming' and 'unfriending'?

PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT

- Are we meeting the statutory requirements on publishing information?
- How does the school communicate with parents? How often? Who? For what purpose? How good is the school website as a source of information for parents? How do you know and how could it be improved? Should the governing body be communicating with parents?
- Do we ensure that parents are made aware of any changes taken place in school?
- When and how were parents last asked for their views about the school? What did the results show? What action was taken as a result?
- How does the school development plan take account of parents' views?
- Is it easy for parents to get in touch with the school?
- Are parents directed toward Ofsted's parent view website?
- What is done to encourage parents to help their children learn? What is the school doing to provide support to/for parents to do this?
- How are parents informed about their child's behaviour (bad/good) and what methods are used to engage them (parents)?
- Why are parents choosing – or not choosing – our school? How do you know that? Are there better ways of learning this?
- Why do children leave the school before their final year? How do you know that? Are there better ways of learning this?
- Should governors be carrying out focus groups to find out more?
- What complaints have we had from parents and what action was taken as a result?

USP Example Ofsted Questions for Governors

- What are the strengths/areas for development?
- What is innovative about the pastoral care - what do you do that other schools don't?
- Tell me about the ELSAs
- Tell me about THRIVE
- Are the aspirations high enough in EYFS?
- Tell me about the curriculum
- Are there any weaknesses in the quality of teaching and learning?
- Tell me about Pupil Premium in this school - what is the impact of PP spending?
- What opportunity do the children get to debate?
- How are Governors involved in monitoring?
- Is RE being taught in this school?
- How do Governors challenge leaders?
- How are Governor training needs identified?
- How do the governors make sure the priorities are moved forward?
- Tell us about your safeguarding training.
- How do you ensure safeguarding is effective?
- What training have governors had? What access do governors have to training?
- How do you ensure staff wellbeing? Give examples
- How do you ensure HT wellbeing?
- What do you hope Y6/ Y11 will have achieved by the time they leave?
- How do you know about staff CPD? How do you know staff have the subject knowledge they need?
- How do you ensure the curriculum is broad, balanced and accessible to all?
- How do you know what pupil premium is spent on and its impact?
- What are your local issues?