



**The de Ferrers Trust**

## **The Role of a Local Governor**

Welcome to governance at The de Ferrers Trust. Thank you for considering/volunteering to take on this important role that makes such a difference to the lives of our students, staff and the local community.

The aim of this document is to give you a better understanding of what it means to be a local governor and what might be expected of you.

### **Governance at The de Ferrers Trust**

The de Ferrers Trust is a multi-academy trust which means that we are responsible for more than one academy.

The Trust is made up of members, trustees (sometimes also known as directors) and local governors. For details as to our governance structure and scheme of delegation please see our website [www.deferrerstrust.com](http://www.deferrerstrust.com)

### **The Role of a Local Governor**

This particular document focuses on the role of a local governor. This is a person who is willing to provide their time on a voluntary basis to sit on a local governing body at one of our academies.

We seek local governors from a range of backgrounds with different skills and levels of expertise. A local governor will use their skills to work with the principal and the senior leadership team to ensure that the students at their academy receive the best possible education.

Each local governing body will have a mixture of elected and appointed local governors however, once appointed to the local governing body, all local governors work together as a collective.

Local governors are asked to seek assurances on behalf of the trust board that their academies are performing as they should.

### **Local Governors are expected to:-**

- 1. Contribute to discussions at Local Governing Body meetings (and communicate with the Trust Board where appropriate) concerning:-**
  - a. The ethos of their academy and whether this supports the Trust's vision
  - b. The priorities and targets for their academy
  - c. The expenditure of the pupil premium allocation and other ring fenced funding.
  - d. The academic performance of all students and any barriers to learning they may face.

- e. Ensuring senior leaders have developed the required policies needed to operate their academy, and ensuring that their academy is operating effectively according to those policies.

There are five local governing body meetings throughout the academic year. Each meeting is two hours in duration and the dates of the meetings are published in advance on the Trust Governance Calendar. Attendance at these meetings is expected, and in the event of non-attendance apologies should be given to the clerk of the local governing body.

Local governors are expected to prepare for these meetings. Local governors will receive all of the documents they require for the meeting at least 7 days in advance. Preparation should involve reading through the documents and making notes of any further explanations or clarifications that may be required. Local governors may feel that they wish to challenge some of the issues they've read about and therefore should prepare what they would like to say. Local governors may come across a complex issue that requires some degree of research. In the event that this research cannot be completed in time for the meeting, and the local governing body feels the issue warrants further research, local governors can suggest to their chair that the item is carried over.

At meetings items may need to be formally approved usually by a show of hands. The chair of the local governing body will have the casting vote in the event of a tie. The outcome of the vote will be recorded in the minutes. To avoid undermining the collective nature of the local governing body the voting decision of an individual local governor does not normally form part of the minutes.

Local governors are given the opportunity at the end of every meeting to ask for items to be added to the agenda for the next meeting. Local governors can also contact their clerk and their chair of governors to request that an item is added to the agenda.

## **2. To monitor their academy's performance by:-**

- a. Reviewing the outcomes from their academy's self-evaluation (the SEF) and understanding the strengths and weaknesses of their academy.
- b. Understanding what the key priorities are for their academy and monitoring progress against the Academy Development Plan
- c. Considering key performance indicators at every meeting to ensure students are making progress.
- d. Asking challenging questions of the senior leadership team. A curious governor is a good governor!
- e. Listening and engaging with stakeholders i.e. students, parents, staff and the wider community, including local employers.
- f. Escalating matters of concern to the trust board.
- g. Visiting their academy occasionally during the day with an agreed focus.

## **3. Ensuring that the academy has suitable, safe premises in order for staff to do their jobs well and for students to learn.**

## **4. When required, sit on local governor panels to consider student exclusions.**

## **5. Participate in training and professional development**

Induction training is mandatory for all local governors during their first year. Thereafter local governors are expected to participate in at least one training event per year and any other

training that may be relevant for their development. Training is provided by the trust which consists of both online and face to face training in a number of areas.

Upon appointment, each local governor is made a member of the National Governors Association which provides access to various guidance documents and resources

## **6. Act in the best interests of all students and behave in a professional manner, as set out in the Trust's Code of Conduct**

As local governors, there may be times when individuals approach you directly to address their issues. Local governors do not have the authority to act alone so should never promise an individual that they will 'sort things'. Local governors are expected to refer the individual to the academy concerned or to the appropriate policy. A local governor who gets involved will 'taint' themselves in the case of any appeal or process and will put themselves in an unnecessarily awkward position.

## **6. Maintain confidentiality**

During meetings subjects may be discussed that are confidential and should not be discussed outside of the local governing body meeting. Confidential items will not be published in the minutes and will be recorded in a confidential appendix.

This list is not exhaustive and is simply an example of the types of activities local governors should be doing to ensure they fulfil their responsibilities.

On appointment, every individual involved in governance will require an enhanced DBS check. This is a simple process and involves completing an online form and providing your academy with proof of your identity.

Local governors will also be required to declare their employment details, any interests they may have with the academy or the trust (both financial and non-pecuniary), and any voluntary positions they already hold. This is so that the trust can ensure they remain transparent with declaring any potential conflict of interests.

**Governance is a thinking and questioning role, not a doing role.**

### **Local Governors should not:**

- Write policies
- Undertake audits of any sort (even if you have the relevant professional experience)
- Spend a lot of time with the students (if local governors want to work directly with the students there may be other valuable roles within academies that you may be interested in).
- Fundraise
- Undertake classroom observations (the word observation means something very different in an educational context. Observations are often used by senior leaders to monitor the quality of teaching and learning and are linked to pay progression. Staff may feel uneasy if local governors start to conduct classroom observations. We would urge local governors to take note of the Governors' Visits Policy for guidance in this area).
- Do the job of academy staff. If there is not enough capacity within the paid staffing structure to carry out the necessary tasks, the principal should be having those discussions with the Chief Executive as their line manager.

## Sources of Information

The National Governance Association [www.nga.org.uk](http://www.nga.org.uk) provides useful information on the role of a local governor.

Alternatively, for further information on governance at The de Ferrers Trust please contact Tammy Pyszky, Director of Governance and Compliance on 01283 372609 or via email on [tpyszky@deferrerstrust.com](mailto:tpyszky@deferrerstrust.com), or Sandra Taylor, Business Administrator on 01283 372615 or via email on [staylor@deferrerstrust.com](mailto:staylor@deferrerstrust.com)