Flying High Partnership

The Flying High Partnership



LOCAL GOVERNANCE HANDBOOK

Flying High Partnership Trust, 2a Vickery Way, Chilwell, Nottingham. NG9 6RY
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We are flying high

Together we will create unique, exceptional and sustainable schools that inspire communities and empower children.



Our schools will be

Unique

Child centred

Context informed



Exceptional

High standards

Continuous improvement



Sustainable

Developing people

Empowering ownership



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Culture

Our adults will demonstrate



Unique
Care
Trust
Humility
Aspiration

Exceptional
Commitment
Curiosity
Desire for feedback
Desire to improve

Sustainable
Enablement
Resilience
Responsibility
Solution focused mindset

Character

Our children will demonstrate

Unique
Aspiration
Kindness
Effective Communication

Exceptional
Confidence
Pride
Curiosity

Sustainable
Responsibility
Resilience
Problem Solving



Introduction

> Together we make every day count by combining the strengths of our partnership with the voice and expertise of our local communities, ensuring every child thrives in a school that is unique, exceptional and sustainable

Paul Goodman, Deputy CEO

At Flying High, we place enormous value on the contribution of our local governors. As volunteers, governors bring a wealth of experience, insight and commitment, helping to ensure that every school remains deeply connected to the community it serves.

Whilst our schools are united by a shared vision, values and culture, we also recognise that every community is unique. Local governors are the custodians of that uniqueness. They understand the strengths, aspirations and challenges of their communities and help ensure that school leaders make informed decisions which reflect the needs of local children and families. In doing so, governors provide both support and challenge, helping schools to remain responsive, ambitious and accountable.

This handbook sets out our expectations for local governance and the important role governors play in championing the vision of Flying High. Through effective governance, governors help create schools that are **unique** in how they reflect and serve their communities, **exceptional** in the opportunities and experiences they provide for children, and **sustainable** in securing long-term success for future generations.

Thank you for the time, expertise and dedication you bring to our schools. Together, we make every day count by combining the strength of our partnership with the voice and expertise of our local communities, ensuring every child thrives in a school that is unique, exceptional and sustainable.



Paul Goodman
Deputy CEO
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Aims of local governance

- Support the development of the school in line with the needs of the community.
- Ensure the school reflects and is responsive to the context it serves.
- Support and be advocates for the mission, and cultural expectations of Flying High.
- Ensure equity and transparency in key decisions taken by the school leadership team.
- Monitor and support the wellness of the Head teacher.
- Provide challenge and support to senior leaders, to ensure opportunities for every child are maximised, in line with the Flying High Scheme of Delegation.
- Provide scrutiny and challenge to ensure long term financial sustainability.
- Ensure the school has a culture which enables the safety and wellbeing of every child.
- Support the Head teacher to ensure a meaningful community and parental voice.

Local Governing Body Membership

Local governing bodies should consist of an optimum number of six. This will include the following:

- Chair of Governors
- Vice Chair of Governors
- Two Parent Governors - elected
- Staff Governor- elected
- Head Teacher - ex officio

Other Appointed Governors- where appropriate, in line with the experience and skills required to support achievement of effective governance or specific development needs/ priorities of the school.

Whilst an optimum membership of six is recommended, local governing bodies have the flexibility to increase membership through increased representation of community governors. Local governing bodies must not exceed a membership of nine.

Parents may be elected as Chair or Vice Chair.

In line with the Scheme of Delegation staff governors and Head teachers have full voting rights as part of the LGB but must not be involved in decisions where there could be a conflict of interest.

Link governor roles will be identified in the following areas:

- Safeguarding, behaviour and attendance
- Finance
- Head teacher appraisal
- Children's experience
- Marketing and communications
- Targeted support (including Pupil Premium, Sports Premium and SEND funding)
- Governor training
- Staff wellness (aligned to staff governor)

The role of the link governor is to complete additional monitoring activity to support governor decision making.



An example Link Governor Visit Form, can be found here.

There is also an example Governor Visit Form which is aimed at enabling all Governors to capture any engagement they have with the school, including school events or additional meetings, they may attend.



An example Governor Visit Form, can be found here.

Responsibilities of the Local Governing Body

In line with the Flying High Scheme of Delegation and overview of responsibilities, the LGB will ensure:

- Senior leaders set strategic objectives for the school.
- Governors act as a custodian for Trust the mission, and cultural expectations
- Development of the character, mission, and ethos of the school.
- Compliance of the school in line with all statutory and Flying High obligations.
- Monitoring of a medium-term sustainable school budget, which is responsive to the needs of the school and all children.
- Provision of challenge and scrutiny to enable a balanced budget, in line with Trust KPIs to be recommended for approval, by the Board of Trustees.
- Provision of challenge and support to senior leaders, in line with Flying High's Scheme of Delegation, to enable every child to achieve to their fullest potential.
- The curriculum delivers a range of appropriate experiences, including opportunities responsive to the context and needs of the children.
- A fair and transparent process, in line with policy to determine admissions to the school(s).
- The school adheres to all statutory processes to enable the safety of every child.
- The school embeds a culture of safeguarding, always recognising personal responsibility for vigilance.
- Involvement in Head teacher appraisal process to ensure targets are set and reviewed, are responsive to the school context and includes the voice of governors.
- A fair and transparent process for appraisal is implemented for all staff.
- A pro-active approach to marketing to support sustainable admissions.
- The school develops a fit for purpose communication mechanism for families and the wider community.
- Families and community voice is represented in appropriate decision making.
- The school has an active and accurate risk register in place.
- The review and approval of school level policies and their implementation.
- The LGB accesses all statutory and developmental training.
- They engage in feedback and an annual review process to ensure that the LGB has the skills and capacity to support the school.

Statutory Responsibilities and Assurance

Flying High Partnership, through its Board of Trustees, retains ultimate legal accountability for the schools within the Trust. Local Governing Bodies exercise responsibilities delegated to them by the Board through the Flying High Scheme of Delegation.
This is an important distinction. Local governors are not expected to manage statutory compliance themselves or become experts in every aspect of education law. They do, however, need to understand the statutory requirements relevant to their responsibilities and be able to seek assurance, provide appropriate challenge and identify where concerns need to be addressed or escalated.

Key areas governors should be aware of:

In carrying out their responsibilities, governors should have an appropriate understanding of statutory requirements relating to:

- Safeguarding and child protection, including the requirements of Keeping Children Safe in Education and the Prevent Duty.
- SEND, equality and inclusion, including how the school meets the needs of pupils with SEND and its wider equality responsibilities.
- Attendance, behaviour and suspensions/exclusions, including the statutory guidance schools are required to follow.
- Admissions, ensuring statutory and agreed Trust processes are followed.
- Finance and use of public money, including effective financial oversight and the appropriate use of targeted funding.
- Data protection and information governance, including the appropriate handling and protection of personal information.
- Employment and safer recruitment, including those responsibilities delegated to the LGB through the Scheme of Delegation.
- Statutory policies and regulatory requirements, ensuring those requiring school-level approval or oversight are appropriately considered.

What does this mean in practice?

Governors fulfil this role through oversight and assurance rather than operational management.
You should be able to ask:

- How do we know?
- What assurance have we received?
- What does the evidence tell us?
- Is there anything we should be concerned about?
- What action is being taken where a risk or weakness has been identified?

Where governors cannot gain sufficient assurance, they should challenge appropriately and where necessary, ensure concerns are escalated in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation.

The Scheme of Delegation remains the definitive reference for determining where accountability and responsibility sit within Flying High.

Meeting structure

The Flying High recommendation is to hold one full governing body meeting per term. This is to support a more **sustainable** approach to school governance, which will enable recruitment of governors and reduce the impact on Head teacher and senior leader workload.

Flying High would encourage all LGBs to discuss with their Head teacher the viability of this approach but recognise two shorter meetings per term may be a preferable model.

Committees will no longer form part of the meeting structure for LGBs

Where appropriate, additional task and finish working groups can be established, to enable a deep dive or a focused development group. Where decision making within a governing body meeting is not possible, working groups will allow a small representation of the governing body to explore an area in more detail enabling decision making at the following meeting.

A standard agenda will be set for each meeting by central team. The agenda will be sent to Chairs and Clerks. The Chair will also be sent an additional Briefing Paper, to support them in effectively chairing the LGB meeting. The Chair and Head teacher should determine which items are a focus for discussion. Where the governing body has taken the decision to complete two shorter meetings within a term, it will be for the Chair and Head teacher to determine and orientate the agenda items, with the support of the clerk.

Elections/ nominations

Chair

At the first meeting of each academic year members of the governing body will have the opportunity to nominate themselves for consideration as Chair of Governors. A confidential process of voting will be followed to confirm the appointment.

Where the LGB are unsuccessful in appointing a Chair, the Trustees will work with the school to identify and nominate an appropriate Chair of Governors.

The Chair of Governors will be elected on an annual basis, as part of the Autumn term full local governing body meeting.

The Chair role descriptor, can be found here.

Vice Chair

At the first meeting of each academic year members of the governing body will have the opportunity to nominate themselves for consideration as Vice Chair of Governors. A confidential process of voting will be followed to confirm the appointment.

The Vice Chair of Governors will be elected on an annual basis, as part of the first full local governing body meeting of the academic year

The Vice Chair role descriptor, can be found here.

Parent governor recruitment process:

The school will advertise the parent governor opportunity.

Any parents wishing to apply should check that they are suitable by reading the parent role descriptor. The parent should then sign the declaration of eligibility form and return this with the completed nomination form.

The Parent Governor role descriptor, can be found here.

They should include a statement, up to 150 words, about themselves, the skills, experience, and commitment they can bring to the governing body and why they would like to become a governor. All words over 150 should be deleted and not used in the election process. The statements should then be included on the ballot paper that goes out to all parents. Schools will acknowledge each nomination within two working days of the closing date.

A deadline date will be stated in the advert. and all nomination forms should be submitted by this date and time.

If there is only one applicant, and they meet the requirements of the role, they should automatically be offered the governor vacancy. Where there is more than one nomination meeting the criteria and role descriptor, the school will run an election process where parents will be invited to vote for their preferred candidate.

The date and time of the ballot count will be confirmed to all nominees, who are welcome to attend the count if they wish.

The candidate (s) with the most votes will be offered the parent governor roles.

In the case of insufficient nominations to appoint both or one of the parent governor positions, the LGB can fill this vacancy via a co-opted governor.

In accordance with the School Governance (Constitution) (England) Regulations 2012, an elected member of the Local Authority (LA) or school staff who are paid to work at the school for more than 500 hours in any consecutive twelve-month period are not eligible for election or appointment as parent governors. However, they can vote in parent governor elections if they are parents of children attending the school and can be governors at another school.

Documents to support parent governor recruitment are available here.

Staff governor recruitment process:

The school will advertise the staff governor opportunity.

Any staff wishing to apply should check that they are eligible by reading the enclosed qualifications and disqualifications criteria.The staff should then sign the declaration of eligibility form and return this with the completed nomination form.

Interested and eligible staff should then complete the nomination form.

They should include a statement, up to 150 words, about themselves, the skills, experience, and commitment they can bring to the governing body and why they would like to become a governor. All words over 150 should be deleted and not used in the election process. The statements should then be included on the ballot paper that goes out to all staff as well as being displayed in the staff room. Schools will acknowledge each nomination within two working days of the closing date.

A deadline date will be stated in the advert, and all nomination forms should be submitted by this date and time.

If there is only one applicant, and they meet the requirements of the role, they should automatically be offered the governor vacancy. Where there is more than one nomination the school will run an election process where staff will be invited to vote for their preferred candidate.

The date and time of the ballot count will be confirmed to all nominees, who are welcome to attend the count if they wish.

The candidate with the most votes will be offered the staff governor roles.

Documents to support staff governor recruitment are available here.

Appointed Governor

Where there is a recognised need for additional capacity or skills, the local governing body may choose to appoint an appointed governor. Appointed governors are identified by the Chair of Governor, but to be approved via a governor vote.

Trustees are responsible for the removal of governors who fail to adhere to the governor code of conduct or requirements of the Scheme of Delegation.

New Governor Induction

All new governors should have access to Governor Induction programme. The purpose of this is to:

- Enable key information about Flying High and the School to be provided
- Enable the new governor to understand how the LGB operates, and who is who. Including how their skills and experience may be used to support/ strengthen the governing body
- Ensure relevant checks and key declarations are completed
- Enable mandatory training and reading is completed, and provide an opportunity for other key aspects of training to be completed
- Enable set up on Governor Hub, including an understanding of how this operates as a communication tool

To support the Governor Induction programme this will include the following:

- Key Information about Flying High and the School
- Copy of the Flying High Terms of Reference
- Governor Handbook
- Tour of the School and information in relation to Strategic Priorities

How the LGB operates and who is who, including how their skills and experience may be used to support/ strengthen the governing body:

See relevant links below:

- Copy of the Scheme of Delegation
- Governor Skills Audit
- Link Governor Roles
- Link Governor Visit Form
- Governor Visit Form
- Governor Training Plan
- Information about the Annual LGB Self-Evaluation and LGB Review

Relevant Checks and Key Declarations

- DBS Check documentation
- Declaration of Business Interests
- Governor Code of Conduct

Mandatory Training / Reading and other relevant training

- Safeguarding Training
- Prevent Training
- Reading Part One of KCSIE (and signing to say this has been completed)
- Data protection and cyber security
- Other relevant training; e.g. the role of a Governor, Safer Recruitment Training, Training linked to identified link governor responsibilities or gaps identified on the Skills Audit

Governor Hub

- Set up
- Opportunity for the new governor to understand the different sections of Governor Hub

Flying High induction

- Online meeting with the DCEO to provide an overview of local governance within Flying High.

Governor Training

At Flying High, we believe that effective governance is underpinned by ongoing learning and development. Governors play a vital role in providing challenge, support and strategic oversight, and it is important that they have the knowledge and confidence to fulfil their responsibilities effectively. Our expectation is that governors engage in training that is proportionate to the responsibilities they hold, reflecting both the Scheme of Delegation and any specific roles they undertake on behalf of the governing body.

We recognise that governors are volunteers who balance their governance responsibilities alongside work, family and other commitments. For this reason, we aim to provide accessible and flexible development opportunities that enable governors to remain informed and effective without creating an unnecessary burden. The table below outlines the statutory and essential training requirements expected of governors, including any role-specific requirements.

Course	Who / renewal	Found at	Length
Annual safeguarding briefing for governors	All Governors	National College - FHP	
Prevent Duty	Full course at induction; annual refresher thereafter	National College click here	1 hr 13 mins
Managing Allegations of Abuse	Governor responsible for allegations; every 3 years	National College click here	2 hrs 30 mins
Certificate in Data Protection	All governors and trustees; at induction and every 3 years, or sooner where a significant change requires retraining	National College click here	30 mins
Cyber Security	All governors and trustees with access to FHP IT systems; annual	NCSC school staff training- click here	36 mins

Governor Training

In addition to these core requirements, all governors have access to a wide range of optional development opportunities through the National College CPL platform. You will each have your own personal account, which can set up via your school office. Governors will also have access to Flying High specific governance training, including pre-recorded sessions focused on Partnership ways of working and key learning. These sessions include an annual safeguarding briefing, managing complaints, financial monitoring and preparing for Ofsted. These can be accessed at a time convenient to you through our dedicated Flying High section within the National College platform.

We encourage all governors to take ownership of their own development, using training opportunities to strengthen their understanding of governance, support informed decision making, and ensure they are well equipped to contribute to the success of their school and the wider Partnership

Local Governing Body Evaluation

Flying High recognise the significant, voluntary contribution governors, including Chairs of Governors, make to schools, and highly value the contributions made by all governors. We know that all our governors are dedicated to their individual school communities and want the best for them. However, as the Ofsted Framework has recently changed 'Leadership and Management' into 'Leadership and Governance' it is important that Flying High provide the required support for governors to ensure they understand and are supported in achieving the 'governance' expectations required.

In response to this Flying High recognise the importance of LGB's being able to understand their effectiveness in supporting the school, including any gaps in experience or areas where improvements can be made, as well as their strengths. It is also important that the LGB understand any failings regarding compliance.

In response to this Flying High have identified TWO stages to Local Governing Body Evaluation.

Stage One : Local Governing Body Annual Self-Evaluation.
This is carried out by the LGB, led by the Chair, and enables the LGB on an annual basis to be able to evaluate their own practice, and to use this to inform training priorities, identify any gaps in governor expertise and skills or where governance practice can be strengthened, identify any compliance issues, and above all to identify and celebrate strengths of their practice. It is expected that this will be completed at the end of the academic year, and taken to the Autumn Term meeting for approval.



A copy of the Local Governing Body Annual Self-Evaluation can be found here.

Stage Two : Local Governing Body Review.
This is carried out by an identified leader, on behalf of Flying High. This will normally take place on a three-year cycle and will be focused on evaluating the effectiveness of the LGB in relation to good practice, Ofsted requirements, and Accountabilities identified in line with the Scheme of Delegation. The LGB Review will take place with the Chair of Governors and Key Governors, and will include engagement in discussions, and consideration of key Governor documentation.

In response to the LGB Review, each section will be RAG rated (Green, Amber, Red), leading to an overall 'best fit' RAG judgements, which will any support the LGB may require moving forward.



A copy of the Local Governing Body Review is available here.

Assurances of Local Governing Body Compliance

In line with Trust expectations, LGBs should be properly constituted, chaired, and meet as a minimum on a termly basis to fulfil core responsibilities in line with the scheme of delegation.

The Trust issues Chairs, Headteachers and named clerks with a termly agenda and advisory guidance to support LGB meetings in the following term. The Trust expects that:

- LGBs will notify the Trust (Company secretary) of changes to the Chair of Governors,
- Headteachers, Chairs and Clerks will fulfil their responsibilities as set out in this Governor Handbook and the Scheme of Delegation,
- Attend the termly Governor hub briefings and an annual governor hub conference.

Governance and Trustee Responsibility Under the Scheme of Delegation, are retained by the Trustees who are accountability for governance across the Trust. In line with this, they require assurances that Local Governance requirements are being met, which includes assurances that:

- LGBs are correctly constituted and chaired
- Meetings are taking place as required
- Clerking arrangements are effective
- Minimum expectations of compliance are being met.

In response to this, the following will be implemented, to enable these assurances to be achieved:

Mandatory Use of GovernorHub by all Flying High Schools, as the single platform for local governance activity. Linked to this will be a central Trust structure which will enable Trust-level oversight of all LGB GovernorHub sites. This will allow:

- Central distribution of agendas, advisory notes and key documents
- Clear visibility of governor membership and roles
- Secure access to minutes and reports.

The Trust, through the Trust Company Secretary, will carry out a Termly Desktop Compliance Audit Each term, of every LGB via GovernorHub. This will be light-touch focused on compliance, and will check for:

- A named and appointed Chair of Governors and Vice Chair
- Up-to-date governor membership and vacancies
- Evidence of meetings taking place via approved minutes
- Headteacher and Chair reports.

This compliance audit will not assess the quality of governance, decision-making, or impact. Its sole purpose is to confirm compliance with minimum expectations.

A summary of audit outcomes will be reported retrospectively to Trustees on a termly basis as part of the full board of Trustees meeting. Should there be any gaps or risks identified, then such gaps will be report to Chair of Governors.

Local Hub Boards

Local Hub Boards (LHBs) are established to provide a channel of communication between the central team, Board of Trustees and Local Governing Bodies. The LHBs for 2026/27 will include both online briefings and an in person annual conference. The annual conference is also part of the Local Hub Boards (LHBs). The format for governor hub briefings and governor hub conference for 2026/27 is as follows.

3 online meetings with Chris Wheatley (CEO) and Paul Goodman (Deputy CEO), taking place for 1.5 hrs.:

- Autumn term governor hub briefing- 17.00- 18.30- 22nd September 2026
- Spring term governor hub briefing- 17.00- 18.30- 16th March 2027
- Summer term governor hub briefing- 17.00- 18.30- 6th July 2027

These online meetings will be a key communication conduit and will include the following:

- Update on key developments across Flying High partnership.
- Updates on national policy changes, relevant to local governing bodies.
- Updates on key whole partnership areas of focus.
- Guidance for local governing bodies, including signposting to training opportunities.
- Any feedback to be raised by local governing bodies.

The in-person annual governor hub conference, will take place as follows:

- 12.30- 16.30-– 20th January 2027 – Flying High Headquarters NG9 6RY.

This governor hub conference will be available to governor hub representatives, and it is expected that it will be attended by either the Chair of Governors or Vice Chair of Governors. Representation at Governor Hubs is compulsory for all local governing bodies, and therefore where the lead representative is not available an appropriate alternative should be identified. The hub conference will provide an in-depth opportunity to work collaboratively with other local governing bodies and the central team. A series of briefings and practical workshops, aim to provide detailed insight into key opportunities and risks to individual schools across the partnership, and provide clear guidance on how local governors can support and challenge their SLT. The central team will be fully present throughout the event, which will include Strategic Development Group (SDG), Finance, Education, HR and Operations. This aims to further enhance the opportunity to connect and engage with both the central team, and other local governing bodies across the partnership.

Representatives are responsible for ensuring information from LHBs is shared in local governing body meetings and enables effective decision making, and an opportunity for this is provided on the LGB Meeting Agenda.

Clerking

Schools will continue to identify and source a clerking service that meets the needs of their school. This could be sourced via a service provider or individual.

All clerks must demonstrate that they have completed appropriate training and have a currency of knowledge.

As part of the procurement of a clerking service, all Flying High schools must include the following.

- Clerk to attend and minute all full governing body meetings.

Reporting Procedures

Within 15 working days of each meeting each LGB will:

- Produce and agree minutes of its meetings
- Provide a summary document identifying
  - (i) decisions made
  - (ii) recommendations to the Board,
  - (iii) any items for the information of the Board and
  - (iv) items for further discussion by the Board, to be raised at Local Hub Boards for escalation to the Board of Trustees or central team as appropriate.



The Clerking role descriptor, can be found here.

Links to relevant Governance Documents

- Overview of scheme of delegation responsibilities
- Role descriptor - Chair of Governors
- Role descriptor - Vice Chair
- Role descriptor - Parent governor
- Role descriptor - Staff governor
- Role descriptor - Appointed Governor
- Role descriptor – Clerk
- Policy Framework
- Parent election documentation
- Support for recruiting governors
- Flying High Terms of Reference
- Governor code of conduct
- Self-Declaration Form for Local Governor Engagement
- Declaration of Business Interests
- Overview of link responsibilities and associated monitoring activity
- Example Link Governor Visit Form
- Example Governor Visit Form
- Example Governor Training Plan
- Local Governing Body Review
- Local Governing Body Annual Self -Evaluation

All Governance documents can be found here.