

TERMS OF REFERENCE

DoWMAT Local Academy Board (LAB) Voluntary Aided

Full Board

1. LAB ROLE AND PURPOSE

The LAB members are accountable to the DoWMAT Board for the quality of support they provide the school, specifically regarding their key functions in line with our Scheme of Delegation and best practice from the National Governance Association ([Local governance here and now](#)), namely:

Standards

- Monitoring school performance and improvement – regular review of performance data, including exam results, attendance rates, and pupil progress, to ensure that the school is meeting its targets.
- Working with senior leaders to identify areas for improvement and develop strategies to address them in line with the trust’s strategic objectives.

Stakeholder engagement

- Ensuring the needs and concerns of all stakeholders (e.g. staff, pupils, parents, local community, church/diocese) are accounted for in the decision-making process and acting as a mouthpiece for their interests and voices at trust level.
- Achieved through effective communication channels, consulting key stakeholders, and working in partnership with the local community.

Safeguarding

- Implementing the trust’s safeguarding policy and fostering a culture that prioritises the safety and wellbeing of all pupils and staff in their respective schools.
- Working closely with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) to ensure the necessary procedures are in place, which can be supported through the appointment of a link governor.
- Monitoring and reviewing the effectiveness of the school’s safeguarding arrangements.

SEND

- Ensuring adequate resources are provided to pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) that support their educational progress.
- Seeking assurances that staff are trained to implement strategies and support plans.
- Working in partnership with other stakeholders, such as parents, external agencies, and the wider MAT community, to ensure that pupils with SEND are well-supported and included in all aspects of school life.
- Like safeguarding, this is usually primarily carried out by a specific link governor.

Spirituality

Ensuring Christian vision and values underpin all aspects of academy life. In this way, we can be assured that our pupils grow and learn in schools where their individual qualities are nurtured to instil fulfilment, self-worth, the skills to contribute to society and confidence in the future.

2. MEMBERSHIP

- 2.1. The Local Academy Board should be made up of members with the appropriate skills set.
- 2.2. As a Voluntary Aided DoWMAT academy, the Local Academy Board shall consist of:
 - (a) **2** Parent LAB members
 - (b) **1** Headteacher (or Head of School)
 - (c) **1** staff member
 - (d) **5** Foundation LAB Members (one of whom should be the Vicar (ex-officio) or, if this is not possible, a Bishop's representative).
 - (e) **No** co-opted LAB members
- 2.3. The total number of LAB board members is **9**.

Note: These are the minimum requirements to allow the LAB to function effectively. The LAB does have the ability to appoint above this number should it be decided that this would be beneficial to the smooth running of the LAB as they carry out their responsibilities. However, additional LAB members will be named 'Associate LAB members' to avoid confusion with the specific roles within the composition, as detailed above.
- 2.4. LAB members (including Associate LAB members) will serve for a period of four years (with the exception of the Head Teacher).
- 2.5. Subject to remaining eligible to be a particular type of LAB member, any LAB member may be re-appointed or re-elected.
- 2.6. The LAB is required to have systems in place through which they can assure themselves of the impact of the Christian vision on the quality of educational provision, financial probity, Health and Safety, Safeguarding and relationships with the community.
- 2.7. The LAB members have a duty to act in the fulfilment of the trust's 'object'; to provide a high level of educational provision, Safeguarding and well-being support to all within the academy community.
- 2.8. New LAB members must sign a form to say they agree to uphold the 'object' of the Trust. This form will be issued by the clerk and keep on file.

3. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR

- 3.1. It is the responsibility of the Local Academy Board to appoint a Chair and Vice-Chair at the first meeting of the academic year. These posts cannot be held by employees of the school.
- 3.2. The LAB is empowered to remove the incumbent Chair and Vice-Chair during the term of office should the LAB consider this action appropriate.
- 3.3. If the Chair and Vice-Chair are absent from any meeting of the LAB, the LAB members shall choose one of their number to act as Chair for that meeting.

4. CLERKING

- 4.1. It is the responsibility of the Local Academy Board to:
 - Appoint a Governance Professional to provide professional clerking for the LAB at the start of the Autumn Term, or to re-affirm the appointment of the existing Governance Professional.
 - Remove the incumbent Governance Professional during the term of office should the LAB consider this action appropriate, and appoint a replacement Governance Professional to cover the end of the outgoing Governance Professional's current term.
 - Appoint a replacement Governance Professional at the next full meeting of the LAB if the Governance Professional resigns during the one-year term. This Governance Professional will hold the post until the end of the existing term of office.
- 4.2. The post of Governance Professional cannot be held by any of the existing LAB members, including the Headteacher. In the absence of the Governance Professional, an individual meeting may be clerked by one of the attending LAB members, but not the Headteacher.
- 4.3. The Governance Professional will circulate the minutes of all meetings to all members of the LAB.
- 4.4. The Governance Professional will upload minutes and LAB documents onto Governor Hub, which can be accessed by the Central Team.
- 4.5. The agenda and papers for submission will be issued not later than 5 working days before the meeting.
- 4.6. Items for the agenda should be sent to the Chair or Governance Professional in advance of the agenda being issued.

5. MEETINGS

- 5.1. The LAB will meet at least four times a year.
- 5.2. There is no requirement from DoWMAT for the Local Academy Board to operate any sub-committees. It is recommended that all business should go through the full Board.
- 5.3. The DoWMAT Report to the LAB document will be completed in each term by the Headteacher / Head of School for delivery to the relevant LAB meeting. This report should be uploaded onto Governor Hub, which can be accessed by the Central Team.
- 5.4. **Legality:** A full meeting of the LAB is only legal when it has been formally convened by the Clerk to the LAB at least 7 days prior to the meeting taking place.
- 5.5. **Attendees:** All LAB members are expected to attend LAB meetings. Other invitees to LAB meetings are issued at the discretion of Chair of the LAB.
- 5.6. **Apologies:** Apologies must be made in advance. Apologies will be considered at the start of the LAB meeting and accepted if agreed by the majority of attending LAB members.
- 5.7. **Quorum:** A LAB meeting is able to proceed when at least 50% of LAB members are present.
- 5.8. **Decisions:** The LAB will generally make decisions by consensus. Where voting is applied to the decision-making process, unless otherwise decided by the LAB beforehand, the outcome of any vote will be

determined by a majority of greater than 50%. In the event of a tied vote, the Chair of the meeting has a deciding second vote or the right of veto.

- 5.9. **Electronic Attendance:** Any LAB member will be able to participate in meetings of the LAB by telephone or video conference provided that he / she participates in the whole agenda item discussion and not just any vote. If after all reasonable efforts it does not prove possible for the person to participate by telephone or video conference, the meeting will still proceed with its business, provided it is quorate.

6. LAB MEMBERS ABSENCE OVER A PERIOD OF TIME

The Local Academy Board can allow a LAB member to absent themselves from meetings for a period of time, for example, due to personal reasons.

The LAB should consider:

- The number of meetings the LAB member has missed
- Whether the LAB member has been able to contribute in ways other than attending meetings during the period of absence
- Whether the LAB member is new or long-standing
- The extent to which the LAB member has kept up to date with the LAB Board's proceedings and events at the school

If the absence is continuing after 6 months, the Chair will meet with the LAB member and discuss whether they can still fulfil their duties. This is a way of offering them a chance to [resign from the governing board](#).

LAB members will cease to hold office if they're absent **without permission** from all their meetings held within a **6-month** period, and where LABs resolve that the office be vacated in line with the Articles of Association.

7. PANELS / NOMINATED LAB MEMBERS

- 7.1. **HEADTEACHER / HEAD OF SCHOOL PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT – a minimum of 2 LAB members are needed for this panel** to attend the Headteacher's / Head of School's performance Management interview.
- 7.2. **PAY PANEL** –to ratify pay in October. Panel members should be nominated in advance of the meeting. For many DoWMAT academies, the Performance Management and Pay Panels are made up of the same members.
- 7.3. **PANELS FOR HR PROCESSES / COMPLAINTS** – Grievance / Capability / Complaints. These panels will be made up as needed. It is important they consist of members who have no prior knowledge of the matter being discussed. DoWMAT will provide an independent advisor to these meetings.
- 7.4. The Board will designate certain roles to specific LAB members for statutory roles;
 - Safeguarding Governor
 - Safer Recruitment Governor
 - H&S Governor

- Pupil Premium Governor
- SEND Governor
- Governor with Prevent training

7.5. The Board may choose to designate specific members to key academy priorities. These nominated members will be asked to report their findings back to the full LAB to ensure all LAB members are fully informed and knowledgeable about their academy. For example;

- School Vision and Values
- SIAMs
- Curriculum
- Phonics
- Behaviour
- Finance
- Assessments / Data

8. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

8.1. LAB members will all fill in an annual Declaration of Business Interest form at the start of each academic year, or on appointment, if appointed during the year.

8.2. Conflict of Interest will be a standing item on each agenda, allowing members to declare any interest on items being discussed (this will include items already declared on the annual business interest declaration).

9. POLICIES

9.1. The majority of DoWMAT policies are provided by the DoWMAT Board of Directors. However, certain school specific and statutory policies / documents have been delegated down to the individual academy.

These include;

- Safeguarding and Child Protection (DoWMAT will provide a model policy)
- Admissions (DoWMAT will provide a model policy)
- SEND
- SEND Report (annual)
- Curriculum Policies
- Equality Objectives (to be reviewed every 4 years)
- Pupil Premium Report
- Sports Premium Report

10. COMPULSORY TRAINING

10.1. LAB members MUST attend the following training on taking up post – or to fulfil specific roles. We would recommend the courses available on Governor Hub.

- Governor Induction – on taking up post
- Annual Safeguarding Training
- Annual Online Safety Training

- Annual Certificate in Cyber Security
- Annual Certificate in Data Protection and GDPR
- Read latest 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' guidance
- Diocesan Board of Education Governors and Clerk Briefings

- Prevent Training – one LAB member
- Safer recruitment Training – one LAB member
- Single Central Record training – one LAB member

11. TERMS OF REFERENCE

This section sets out the most significant responsibilities of the Committee. It is not an exhaustive list and may be amended at the Board's discretion to ensure key objectives are met.

11.1. IN RESPECT OF THE VISION AND VALUES

- To ensure that the academy vision is a theologically driven, Christian vision
- To ensure the Christian vision and values underpin all aspects of the academy provision
- To monitor the impact of the vision throughout the academic year and provide feedback to senior leaders on its effectiveness in enabling all within the academy community to flourish.

11.2. IN RESPECT OF ENSURING HIGH STANDARDS OF ACHIEVEMENT AND IMPROVED PERFORMANCE

- To ensure that academy leaders are effectively challenged and supported to maximise outcomes for all pupils, including those who are vulnerable.
- To review and approve the School Improvement Plan (SDP)
- To receive reports from the Headteacher / Head of School at each meeting, in order to review outcomes and impact against the priorities of the School Development Plan.
- To challenge and support the senior leaders to achieve best practice in terms of impact, outcomes, quality and cost.
- To receive and review DoWMAT School Improvement reports to ensure senior leaders are taking all steps possible to provide quality provision for all pupils.

11.3. IN RESPECT OF ENSURING STRONG AND ROBUST GOVERNANCE

- To ensure compliance with the DoWMAT expectations; as detailed in the Scheme of Delegated Authority and the DoWMAT Financial Handbook
- To ensure the Terms of Reference are followed.
- To ensure LAB members are aware of the Code Of Conduct for LAB members and that this document is read by all at the start of the academic year (and signed for).
- To approve all academy specific policies and keep these under regular review.
- To take timely action to address decisions or requests from the DoWMAT Central Team.
- To ensure attendance at DoWMAT Chair / CEO meetings.
- To ensure statutory posts are filled;
 - Safeguarding Governor

- Safer Recruitment Governor
- H&S Governor
- Pupil Premium Governor
- SEND Governor
- Governor with Prevent training
- To review its own effectiveness regularly and agree appropriate actions to improve its performance.
- To undertake a LAB Skills Audit on a regular basis (minimum once every 2 years) to ensure the Board maintains a comprehensive skill set.
- To ensure the school website is up to date and all school statutory policies are in place and published on the website, to include;
 - Safeguarding Policy
 - Admissions (3 policies – current year, following year and following year plus 1))
 - Pupil Premium Report
 - Sports Premium Report
 - Uniform Information
 - First Aid Policy
 - SEND Policy
 - SEND Report
 - Assessment Results
 - LAB Committee information
 - Equality Objectives
- DoWMAT statutory Policies are all available on the DoWMAT website. These can be signposted from the school website by a link.
- To ensure a register of LAB member interests is on the school website.

11.4. IN RESPECT OF ENSURING SOUND FINANCIAL PRACTICES

- To support senior leaders to make sound financial decisions so that end of year budget figures are met.

11.5. IN RESPECT OF ENSURING EFFECTIVE CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING

- All LAB members to undertake annual Safeguarding training and sign to say they have received this.
- To approve the academy Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and keep it under regular review.
- To read the relevant sections of Keeping Children Safe in Education, and the complete academy Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy – and sign to say this has been completed.
- To provide support and challenge to senior leaders with respect of safeguarding to ensure this has a high profile within the school community.
- To nominate a LAB member with particular responsibility for Safeguarding and Child Protection, who will undertake regular Single Central Record checks and carry out an annual Safeguarding audit.
- To ensure at least one LAB member has undertaken Safer Recruitment Training.

11.6. IN RESPECT OF ADMISSIONS

- To agree the Admissions Policy each year and ensure this is publicised on the academy website.

- To consult every 7 years on the School's Admissions Policy – and also to consult in between times should the policy be substantially changed in the meantime beyond statutory amendments.

11.7. IN RESPECT OF HEADTEACHER / HEAD OF SCHOOL PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

- Two LAB members to attend the annual Performance Management interview. This will be led by a DoWMAT school improvement advisor.
- The nominated two members to meet the Headteacher / Head of School at a half way point during the school year to review the objectives set.

11.8. IN RESPECT OF PAY

- To ratify the Pay decisions recommended by the Headteacher, following the staff appraisal process.

12. REVIEW

These Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually by the DoWMAT board and academies will be informed of any changes / updates.

Document History

Date	Author	Summary Changes	Approved by
30.06.2025	Vicky Rudge	1 Annual review 2. LAB Role and Purpose Update 3. Training Requirements Update	Trust Board
04.10.2024	Vicki Shelley	1. Annual Review 2. 2.2. (d) – ‘someone with church knowledge’ changed to ‘a Bishop’s representative’. 3. Section 6. added: LAB Member Absences Over a Period of Time. 3. All LAB documents to be stored on Governor Hub; change to points 4.3., 4.4. and 5.3.	Trust Board