

Governance Handbook for Trustee's and LGB Members

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Introduction

Welcome to The Diamond Learning Partnership Trust, a charitable multi-academy trust. We work hard to achieve the highest level of support, teaching and resources in an outstanding environment and are extremely proud of the success of our pupils and staff. This success is underpinned by the support of parents and carers who work together with the Trust and their children to help achieve the highest possible standards.

Read more about us on our website: www.diamondlearningtrust.com

The Trustees firmly believe each academy school's Local Governing Body (LGB) is an essential part of the governance structure of our MAT. Members of the LGB have an in-depth knowledge of all aspects of their individual academy school, resulting in more effective governance of the MAT as a whole.

This handbook aims to provide you with key information about the Trust, and to signpost you to useful documents and additional training.

If you have any enquiries relating to governance and training, please contact the Clerk to the Board of Directors dlptclerk@diamondlearningtrust.com.



What is a MAT?

A Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) is a single legal entity and a charitable company held accountable for multiple academies within the Trust. [The principle object of a Multi-Academy Trust is to deliver education.](#) The MAT is governed through a single set of members and trustees, the Board.

Our MAT Board has chosen to delegate governance functions to Local Governing Bodies (LGB) & other committees through a Scheme of Delegation.

All the schools in the DLPT work in collaboration as one entity to improve and maintain high educational standards across the trust.

Please refer to the main DLPT website <https://diamondlearningtrust.com/> for our vision and information about each school.

Some advantages of being part of a MAT:

- ◇ The Trust itself is the employer of all the staff, rather than the individual academies. This makes it far easier to transfer staff resources across all academies within the Trust. For example, spreading out good and outstanding teaching, enabling staff career development, developing staff experience in different catchments or contexts.
- ◇ The MAT's formal structure allows more school to school support – all of our schools have strengths that through sharing and collaboration, benefit all the schools in the Trust.
- ◇ Economies of scale through shared or centralised services such as finance and HR can be achieved. The academies within the MAT can often negotiate preferable contracts and services, improving value for money for example.

Although all schools in the MAT collaborate, the Board considers it very important that each school in the DLPT has its own identity. Heads still have autonomy and are in charge of the day to day running and decision making in their school. Each school's vision and character can be found on the individual school's website.

About Us

The Diamond Learning Partnership Trust works collaboratively with its Headteachers and Senior Leadership Teams; empowering them to develop and embed strategies that will produce the best outcomes for the children in their individual schools.

With an outstanding education, every child has the freedom to choose their own future.

The Diamond Learning Partnership Trust is a charitable multi-academy trust. We are extremely proud of the success of our pupils and staff, and we work hard to achieve the highest level of support, teaching and resources in an outstanding environment. This success is underpinned by the support of parents and carers who work hard with the Trust and their children to achieve the highest possible standards.

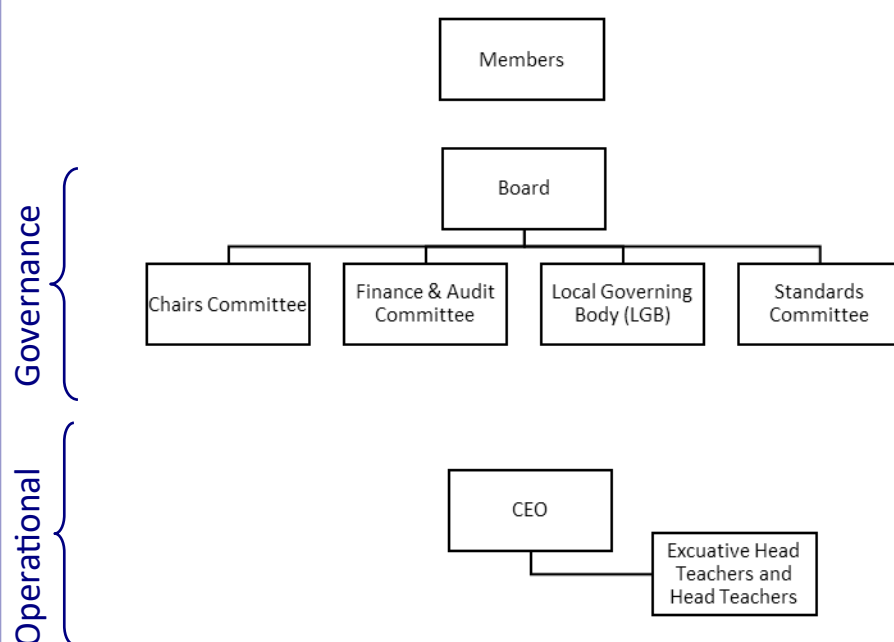
Since our Trust was formed in 2012, The Diamond Learning Partnership Trust has grown in a considered and gradual way. Now, we are a family of 15 schools across Cambridgeshire, Peterborough and Royston, serving over 4,000 children and young people and 650 staff.

The aim of The Diamond Learning Partnership Trust is to create schools where every child achieves the highest possible standards through a relentless focus on high quality teaching and learning. As a Trust we work with partners across the sector to seek out, develop, implement and share best practice. We believe passionately in sector led improvement and embrace world class systems, maximise sharing of resources, expertise, knowledge and opportunity within the Diamond family and beyond.

School websites:

Braybrook <https://www.braybrookprimary.co.uk>
Burrowmoor <https://www.burrowmoor.net/>
Glebelands <http://www.glebelands.cambs.sch.uk>
Gorefield <https://www.gorefield.cambs.sch.uk>
Great Staughton <http://www.greatstaughton.cambs.sch.uk>
Kimbolton <http://www.kimboltonprimaryacademy.cambs.sch.uk>
King James <https://www.kjar.org.uk>
Leverington <http://www.leveringtonprimary.co.uk>
Middlefield <http://www.middlefield.cambs.sch.uk>
Morrow <http://www.morrowprimary.co.uk>
Roman Way <https://www.romanway.herts.sch.uk>
Round House <http://www.roundhouseprimary.co.uk>
Thomas Eaton <http://www.thomaseatonschool.co.uk>
Winhills <http://www.winhills-cambs.co.uk>
Wintringham <http://www.wintringhamprimary.co.uk>

Structure of the DLPT



- ◇ Members appoint the Trustees to the Board.
- ◇ Trustees have ultimate responsibility for the governance of the Trust. Their three core governance areas are:
 - ◆ Providing the strategic direction and vision
 - ◆ Ensuring each headteacher delivers against expectations & objectives and achieves positive educational results
 - ◆ Financial responsibility and stability
- ◇ They delegate responsibility for running the Trust to the CEO, and other responsibilities to a set of committees.

Structure of the DLPT

Members.

The Members are the foundation of the company, similar to shareholders of a company, who have rights under relevant company law and therefore charge of the company. The Members for the Trust have limited powers; they appoint Trustees and are able to amend the Trust's Articles of Association.

Trustees.

The Trustees of a MAT have control over the governance of the MAT's affairs and give ultimate direction to all of its activities. Trustees are appointed by the Members.

They are responsible and accountable for everything with ultimate responsibility for the governance of the Trust. They have statutory and fiduciary duties, ensuring the MAT operates within its objects (purpose) and acts in the best interests of the children. They are accountable for the performance of the schools in the MAT.

They are responsible for **three core governance areas** as performed by a governing body in a maintained school:

- ◇ Providing clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction to the MAT
- ◇ Ensuring the executive leaders deliver against expectations, objectives and achieves positive educational results
- ◇ Overseeing the financial performance and stability of the MAT

The Trustees must:

- ◇ Impose appropriate financial controls and reporting systems
- ◇ Produce well thought through budgets
- ◇ Ensure assets are adequately insured
- ◇ Obtain and consider appropriate professional advice

The DfE regards the Board of Trustees as the governing board, so it is accountable to the DfE. It can't delegate accountability BUT can and does delegate responsibility for doing things.

Committees.

Trustees delegate responsibility to committees to support them in being the accountable body. Their responsibilities are set out in the Scheme of Delegation.

[Scheme-of-Delegation-May-2024.pdf](#)

In the DLPT, Trustees delegate responsibility to the Standards Committee, Finance and Audit Committee and LGBs. Trustees appoint all members of these committees. Parent and staff members of the LGB are selected by the community, nominated, then approved & appointed by the Trustees. The Trustees delegate responsibility for running the Trust to the CEO, so the CEO runs the Trust, delegating to Heads.

Who's who

- ◇ Members—Alan Ball, David Lowndes, Greg Watson, Mark Young & Richard Conway
- ◇ Chair of Trustees - Godfrey Smith
- ◇ Vice Chair of Trustees—Mark Young
- ◇ CEO of the DLPT - Susannah Connell
- ◇ Deputy CEO of the DLPT - Tracy Bryden
- ◇ CFOO—Jonathan Lewis
- ◇ Clerk to the Trust Board—Jackie Schad dlptclerk@diamondlearningtrust.com

The full list of the Directors can be found on our website:

<https://diamondlearningtrust.com/techer-type/directors-of-tdlpt/>

Centralised Services

Diamond EPL

This department provides the following services to all Staff, Trustees and LGB Members.

- ◇ Provides inductions for new staff, Trustees and LGB members
- ◇ Provides safeguarding training through Smartlog with annual Safeguarding and Prevent along with other key training
- ◇ Provides “New to the LGB” and termly “LGB Briefing” training for all LGB Members
- ◇ Provides Subject Lead training for all staff throughout the year

Estates

The estates function within the Diamond Learning Partnership Trust refers to the management, maintenance, and development of the physical environment to support education. It ensures that school buildings and facilities are safe, efficient, and conducive to a suitable teaching and learning environments for all its students and staff. The estates department will help to deliver on the Trusts long term strategy, which aligns to our children’s educational needs. It will work in partnership with the Headteachers and their staff to manage all aspects of the properties including upkeep, care, maintenance, security, and health and safety.

The Key functions of Estates Management within the Trust are:

- ◇ **Health & Safety Compliance** – Ensuring the school environment meets statutory safety requirements, including fire safety, asbestos management, and accessibility. The estates department will work with external audit companies and school staff to ensure accurate records are kept and maintained. The estates department offers advice, training and support to meet these duties.
- ◇ **Building Maintenance & Repairs** – Support schools to use their annual condition surveys to create routine maintenance programmes, help to arrange reactive repairs, and looking at longer-term refurbishment plans to keep facilities in optimal condition.
- ◇ **Sustainability & Energy Efficiency** – Implementing green initiatives to reduce carbon footprint and improve energy efficiency.
- ◇ **Budget & Financial Planning** – Effective use of capital budgets for estates investment, working with the Trusts strategic estate surveyor partners and other external agencies to prioritise projects to improve the learning environment of our children. Assisting schools with the development of bids for capital funding opportunities.
- ◇ **Compliance with Department for Education (DfE) Guidelines** – Following policies like **Good Estate Management for Schools (GEMS)**, which outlines best practices in estate planning and operations.

Centralised Services

Finance

The DLPT operates with a central finance team with one bank account. The financial management of the Trust budget is delegated by the Board to the CEO, and then through the Scheme of Delegation. Management of the school budget is the responsibility of the Head Teacher not the LGB. The Scheme of Delegation gives the LGB the mechanism to identify and take action in the event that resources are inadequate or being deployed badly. The mechanisms by which the LGB can discharge the delegated responsibility could include:

- ◇ a discussion about the adequacy of the budget and its implications for staff and premises at the start of the year.
- ◇ a regular review of the size of the carry-forward.

Human Resources

This department acts as a strategic partner to the schools and the Trust, providing centralised HR administration and advisory support to all schools, which allows Head Teachers to focus on teaching and learning and the day to day running of their school. The main areas of responsibility are payroll and recruitment. The department:

- ◇ maintains a suite of policies relevant to Employment law and staff matters which provides consistency in key policies which are standard across the trust, so legally compliant. These include Health and Safety, First Aid, Safeguarding, Absence and Discipline and Whistleblowing. Policies are generic covering all schools across the trust but appendices are amended to be school specific.
- ◇ conforms to legislation particularly in relation to GDPR, Data Protection and safeguarding.

Role of a Trustee

The purpose of the academy trust board is to provide:

- ◇ Strategic leadership of the academy trust: the board defines the trust vision for high quality and inclusive education in line with its charitable objects. It establishes and fosters the trust's culture and sets and champions the trust strategy including determining what, if any, governance functions are delegated to the local tier
- ◇ Accountability and assurance: the board has robust effective oversight of the operations and performance of the academy trust, including the provision of education, pupil welfare, overseeing and ensuring appropriate use of funding and effective financial performance and keeping their estate safe and well-maintained
- ◇ Engagement: the board has strategic oversight of relationships with stakeholders. The board involves parents, schools and communities so that decision-making is supported by meaningful engagement

Role of an LGB Member

Members of the LGB are part of the overall framework of governance with a focus on their individual school. The Board of Directors have ultimate responsibility for the governance of the Diamond Learning Partnership Trust (ie all the schools in the MAT). Members of the LGB do not become involved in day-to-day management issues – that is the role of the Head Teacher.

You are there to:

- ◇ ensure that all children in the academy school are receiving a high quality education and making rapid progress towards achieving the full extent of their potential
- ◇ monitor and evaluate the standards, achievements and progress of all the children and the effectiveness of teaching, leadership and management in the academy school
- ◇ act as a critical friend - provide the Head with support and offer advice and information but also to provide some challenge. The LGB is there to monitor and evaluate the school's effectiveness and members should therefore be prepared to ask challenging questions and hold the Head to account
- ◇ require action by the Head wherever deficiencies are identified

Role of the Clerk

Clerk to the Trust Board

To oversee all aspects of governance effectiveness and compliance within the trust, ensure governance adheres to good practice and meets all statutory and regulatory requirements, and provide strategic leadership of services that support governance across the trust.

This is achieved by:

- ◇ supporting the efficient and effective operation of the trust board and its committees
- ◇ ensuring governance at all levels is carrying out its functions
- ◇ managing and coordinating the delivery and ongoing improvement of governance support across the trust
- ◇ work with executives, strategic and operational leads to ensure support for governance is compliant and effective
- ◇ act as the lead adviser on issues relating to the governance of schools and or the trust
- ◇ ensuring effective communications are maintained with governing boards, governance professionals and stakeholders such as the DfE
- ◇ overseeing a strategy and protocol for recruiting governors and trustees that ensures the board and its committees are properly constituted, inclusive, diverse and meet the needs of the organisation
- ◇ leading on the strategy and planning of governance induction and CPD
- ◇ developing and overseeing systems for board self-evaluation and review, including commissioning of external reviews
- ◇ maintaining appropriate records of trust board and academy committee membership, along with any terms of reference
- ◇ ensuring copies of statutory policies and other statutory documents such as the scheme of delegation and register of interests are published as agreed (on the trust and/or school website) and in line with statutory requirements
- ◇ managing the flow of information between the trust board and academy committees and members, maintaining an up-to-date record of academy committee business
- ◇ developing trust-specific documents such as a governance code of conduct and skills matrix
- ◇ maintaining the trust's online governance portal or equivalent
- ◇ ensuring board and committee meetings are efficient, effective and properly recorded
- ◇ delivering induction, training and briefings

LGB Clerk

- ◇ Carries out all administration duties for the LGB including production of agendas and minutes
- ◇ Ensures that meetings are quorate, advising the Head Teacher and Chair if there is a risk of the meeting being non-quorate
- ◇ Supports the Clerk to the Trust Board when needed

Training and Development For Trustees and LGB Members

At the DLPT we believe investment in the professional development of all staff is extremely important in retaining high quality personnel and in establishing outstanding environments and experiences for our pupils. This includes members of LGBs and Trustees. Therefore, we have created a range of opportunities for training and development specifically to suit the needs of members of the LGB.

The Diamond Teaching School develops and delivers bespoke training for both new and experienced members of LGBs. You can also access a wide range of online training units through Governor Hub

Bespoke training:

For new members of the LGB - a course of 3 sessions throughout the academic year to support new members of the LGB to navigate various aspects of their role, including supporting them with effective ways to monitor and evaluate their school's performance

- ◇ Roles and responsibilities
- ◇ The School Development Plan
- ◇ Understanding school level data
- ◇ Conducting effective school visits

For experienced members of the LGB - termly sessions providing updates and information as well as development on issues pertinent to the stage of the academic year.

Induction

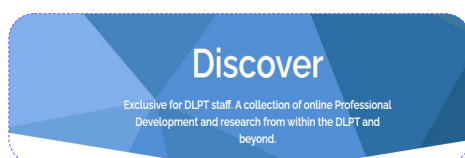
You will be invited to an Trust Induction with the Clerk to the Trust Board, this will give you an overview of your role, school and Trust. This will also be an opportunity to ask any questions you may have.

Training and Development



Provides key training for Trustees and LGB Members

Coming soon!



Discover Portal—<https://staff.diamondepl.org/>

The exclusive to DLPT staff, portal contains a collection of resources, online professional development, and research from within the DLPT and beyond.



Governor Hub—GovernorHub

All Trustees and LGB Members are given access to Governor Hub on approval from the Trustees.

Governor Hub helps Trustees, LGB Members and Clerks to communicate and store documents, membership details, meeting scheduled and other information in one secure and accessible place.

It also provides “The Key's” expert advice and guidance for school and Trust governing boards within GovernorHub itself, called ‘GovernorHub Knowledge’

Code of Conduct

Upon joining all Trustees and LGB Members are required to complete a Code of Conduct. This will be sent to you by the Clerk to the Trust Board

The Code of Conduct includes:

The seven principles of public life

(Originally published by the Nolan Committee: The Committee on Standards in Public Life was established by the then Prime Minister in October 1994, under the Chairmanship of Lord Nolan, to consider standards of conduct in various areas of public life, and to make recommendations).

Selflessness - Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

Integrity - Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

Objectivity - Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

Accountability - Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

Openness - Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

Honesty – Holders of public office should be truthful

Leadership – Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

Why do we have a Code of Conduct?

The Code of Conduct sets out your role and responsibilities. Along with signposting to key documents to support your role.

Pecuniary Interest and Related Parties

Upon joining all Trustees and LGB Members are required to complete a Pecuniary Interest and Related Parties form.

These forms are sent every September to all Key Staff, Trustees and LGB Members

Why do we have a Pecuniary Interest and Related Parties form?

- ◇ This is a MUST from the Gov Handbook
- ◇ The register of Pecuniary Interest and Parties is uploaded to the DLPT website
- ◇ External Auditors review the Trust annually to review register
- ◇ Captures any related parties of Key staff, Trustees and LGB Members
- ◇ Captures any conflict of interest for all Key Staff, Trustees and LGB Members

Accessing your school email

Appendix 1

You will be issued with a staff email address. This email address will be used for all school related communications and it is your responsibility to ensure you check this email address regularly (recommended daily / expected weekly).

How to access your school email address

You can access your school email account in your web browser by connecting to the following URL address: <https://outlook.office.com> in the address bar. For first time set up follow the steps below:

- ◇ In the Sign In field type in your email address.
- ◇ In the password box enter the temporary password you were given by the Trust Clerk
- ◇ You will then be brought to a screen where you will be asked to change your password.
- ◇ Your new password is now set and you will be brought to the Microsoft Office 365 Home Page. To access your email click on the Outlook App on the top left hand side of the screen
- ◇ You will be asked to set up Outlook for the first time. Select English for the language and London for the time zone .
- ◇ You are now able to view your emails and send emails from your staff account.
- ◇ Please note you will periodically be asked to update your password for security reasons. Please always keep a note of your password as it is unique to you. If you experience any problems please contact the Trust Clerk.

**It is expected that you will monitor this email address regularly (recommended daily / expected weekly). Communication, training invitations and notifications will be sent to your work email address.*



Acronym buster

Appendix 2

CIC	Children in Care
CPLD	Continuing Professional & Leadership Development
DBS	Disclosure and Barring Service
DfE	Department for Education
DSG	Dedicated Schools Grant
EAL	English as an Additional Language
ECT	Early Career Teacher
EHCP	Education, Health and Care Plan
EFA	Education Funding Agency
FGB	Full Governing Body
FSM	Free School Meals
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
FOI	Freedom of Information
GAG	General Annual Grant
LA	Local Authority
LAC	Looked After Children
LGB	Local Governing Body
LSCB	Local Safeguarding Children Board
MAT	Multi-Academy Trust
MFL	Modern Foreign Languages
PSED	Public Sector Equality Duty
PP	Pupil Premium
PRP	Performance-Related Pay
QTS	Qualified Teacher Status
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disability
SDP	School Development Plan (Used by Schools)
SEF	Self Evaluation Form (Used by Schools)
SIP	School Improvement Partner
STPCD	School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document
TA	Teaching Assistant

