

Ormiston Academies Trust

Local Governing Body Terms of Reference

Document version control

Policy type	Mandatory
Author	Louise Hall, Interim Head of Governance
Approved by	Trust Board, July 2025
Release date	July 2025
Next release date	Policies will be reviewed in line with OAT's internal policy schedule and/or updated when new legislation comes into force
Description of changes	• Removal of power to establish sub-committees other than those required by statute • Arrangements for Joint LGBs included • Number of meetings per year and optional meetings amended

Contents

1. Glossary	3
2. Responsibilities of trustees and the local governing body	4
3. Composition of the local governing body	5
4. Composition of a joint local governing body	6
5. Resignation and removal	7
6. Persons ineligible to be governors	8
7. Term of office	9
8. Conflicts of interest	10
9. Appointment of chair and vice-chair	10
10. Meetings of local governing body	10
11. Quorum	11
12. Proceedings of meetings	11
13. Minutes and publication	12
14. Delegation of functions and committees	12

1. Glossary

“academy”	means <i>[insert name of academy]</i>
“Articles”	means the Articles of Association of the Trust
“Associate”	means a person who attends the local governing body to provide specific skills, knowledge or experience or viewpoints who will not have a vote on matters to be decided and any decisions about admissions, student exclusions, the academy budget, financial commitments or the appointment of governors
“Chief Executive Officer/CEO”	means the person appointed by the Trustees as an employee to oversee and coordinate all Trust activities
“DfE”	Means the Department for Education and any successor in title
“Chief Financial Officer”	means the person appointed by the Trustees as an employee, under the overall direction of the Chief Executive, to oversee the financial aspects of the Trust
“governor”	means a member of the local governing body
“Joint Local governing body”	means any local governing body for two or more academies constituted as provided by clause 4 of this document. Except in paragraphs 3 and 14 relating to composition and delegation respectively all references to “local governing body” shall also mean joint local governing body
“LA”	means the local authority for the academy(ies)
“Local governing body”	means the local governing body for the academy constituted as provided by Clause 3 of this document
“Ormiston / OAT”	means Ormiston Academies Trust

“Parent governor”	means a governor elected to the local governing body by the parents of students at the academy
“Personal Financial Interest”	means any interest in the employment or remuneration of, or the provision of any other benefit to, a governor as further detailed within clauses 6.5 to 5.9 of the Memorandum
“Principal”	means the member of staff at the academy who has been appointed by the Trustees to have overall day to day control of and responsibility of the academy
“Principal Sponsor”	means Ormiston Trust
“Secretary”	means the Company Secretary of the Trust or any other person appointed to perform the duties of Secretary to the Trust
“Staff governor”	means a governor of the staff elected to the local governing body by members of staff of the academy
“this document”	means these Terms of Reference
“the Trust”	means Ormiston Academies Trust, a company limited by guarantee having registered number 06982127
“the Trustees”	means those persons appointed as trustees of the Trust

1.1. Unless the context requires otherwise, a reference to:

1.1.1. A numbered clause is a reference to the clause so numbered in this document

1.1.2. A numbered paragraph is a reference to the paragraph so numbered in this document

2. Responsibilities of trustees and the local governing body

2.1. The Trust is a charitable company limited by guarantee. It has entered into a Master Funding Agreement and any Supplemental Funding Agreements covering the funding of the Academies within the Trust (together the “Funding Agreements”).

- 2.2. The Trustees are the charity trustees (within the terms of section 177(1) of the Charities Act 2011) and responsible for the general control and management of the administration of the Trust in accordance with the provisions set out in the Memorandum and Articles.
- 2.3. The local governing body shall be a Committee of the Trustees established pursuant to articles 100 to 104 of the Articles of Association of the Trust.
- 2.4. The responsibilities of the trustees and local governing body are outlined in the trust's scheme of delegation.

3. Composition of the local governing body

- 3.1. The membership of the local governing body shall be determined in accordance with the following provisions:
- 3.2. The total membership shall be no fewer than 6, including the principal, and no more than 15.
- 3.3. The membership shall comprise:
 - a. the principal as ex-officio member
 - b. two elected parent governors
 - c. at least one but no more than two elected staff governors
 - d. at least one member co-opted by governors as a community governor
 - e. at least one OAT nominee (sponsor governor) and
 - f. such other members as the Trust decides
 - g. The local governing body may also appoint optional Associates to provide specific skills, knowledge and/or experience and viewpoints to the local governing body. The scope and length of service shall be agreed with the chair of governors but will not exceed a normal term of office (4 years). Associates may attend (but may not vote at) local governing body meetings. Local governing bodies are encouraged to appoint Associate members to develop knowledge and experience, and succession plans for future appointments.
- 3.4. The local governing body is encouraged to continually reflect on the skills and diversity of its membership and seek governors to fill vacancies accordingly.
- 3.5. The local governing body may continue to act notwithstanding a temporary vacancy in its composition.
- 3.6. The academy will work in collaboration with the governance team to recruit and appoint a suitably experienced and/or qualified clerk/governance professional to support its governors and work with the OAT governance team in the performance of necessary duties.

4. Composition of a joint local governing body

- 4.1. The membership of a joint local governing body shall be determined in accordance with the following provisions:
- 4.2. The total membership shall be no fewer than 6 including the principal of each school and no more than 15.
- 4.3. The membership shall comprise:
 - a. each principal as ex-officio members
 - b. two elected parent governors. In the case of a two-academy local governing body one parent governor shall be elected from each academy, where possible. Where a joint local governing body covers more than two academies, arrangements shall be made to rotate the academy from which the parent governors are elected as terms of office expire.
 - c. at least one but no more than two elected staff governors. In the case of a two-academy local governing body one staff governor shall be elected from each academy, where possible. Where a joint local governing body covers more than two academies, arrangements shall be made to rotate the academy from which the staff governors are elected as terms of office expire.
 - d. at least one member co-opted by governors as a community governor
 - e. at least one OAT nominee (sponsor governor) and
 - f. such other members as the Trust decide
 - g. A joint local governing body may also appoint optional Associates to provide specific skills, knowledge and/or experience and viewpoints to the local governing body. The scope and length of service shall be agreed with the chair of governors but will not exceed a normal term of office (4 years). Associates may attend (but may not vote at) joint local governing body meetings.
- 4.4. Local governing bodies are encouraged to appoint Associate members to develop knowledge and experience, and succession plans for future appointments.
- 4.5. The local governing body is encouraged to continually reflect on the skills and diversity of its membership and seek governors to fill vacancies accordingly.
- 4.6. The local governing body may continue to act notwithstanding a temporary vacancy in its composition.
- 4.7. The academy will work in collaboration with the governance team to recruit and appoint a suitably experienced and/or qualified clerk/governance professional to support its governors and work with the OAT governance team in the performance of necessary duties.

5. Resignation and removal

- 5.1. A governor may at any time resign their office by giving notice in writing to the clerk to the local governing body.
- 5.2. With the exception of the chair and OAT nominees, a local governing body can propose the removal of a governor by submitting a recommendation, approved by a majority vote at a governors' meeting, for the removal to be considered by the CEO. This would normally be as a result of a breach of the Code of Conduct (available in the Resources section of GovernorHub)
- 5.3. The Trustees may terminate the appointment of any governor whose presence or conduct is deemed by the Trustees not to be in the best interests of the Trust or the academy.
- 5.4. Any staff member or non-teaching staff member shall automatically cease to hold office if they cease to be associated with the academy in the capacity in which they were elected.
- 5.5. Governors may be suspended for all or some Local governing body or Committee meetings, this can be for a fixed period based on the following grounds:
 - 5.5.1. Any staff governor who is suspended from their role as a staff member will also be suspended in their role as a governor.
 - 5.5.2. Any parent governor who is banned from school site will not be permitted to attend LGB meetings for the duration of their ban.
 - 5.5.3. that the governor is the subject of any criminal proceedings in any court or tribunal, the outcome of which may be that they are disqualified from continuing to hold office as a governor under the articles of association
 - 5.5.4. that the governor is in breach of any of the provisions of the code of conduct which the LGB believes has, or could, bring the academy, the LGB or their office into disrepute.
 - 5.5.5. that the governor has acted in a way that is inconsistent with the ethos of the academy and has brought or is likely to bring the academy, the LGB or their office into disrepute.
 - 5.5.6. that the governor is in breach of their duty of confidentiality to the academy or to any member of staff or to any student at the academy.
 - 5.5.7. that the governor conducts themselves in a way that contravenes the ethos of OAT and the academy.
- 5.6. A resolution to suspend a governor from office shall not have effect unless the matter is specified as an item of business on the agenda for the meeting of which notice has been given in accordance with the articles of association.
- 5.7. Before a vote is taken on a resolution to suspend a governor, the governor proposing the resolution shall at the meeting, state their reasons for doing so. The governor who is the subject of the resolution shall then be given the opportunity to make a statement in response before withdrawing from the meeting.

- 5.8. Any governor who does not complete the following will be automatically considered for removal from their governor role:
 - 5.8.1. Within 6 weeks of appointment:
 - 5.8.1.1. DBS check (number provided to school)
 - 5.8.2. Within 12 weeks of appointment and thereafter each new academic year:
 - 5.8.2.1. Full declaration of interests and confirmations on GovernorHub
 - 5.8.2.2. Mandatory training modules
- 5.9. Governors who do not complete the actions above within the required timescales will be contacted and given one month to complete the required action. At the end of this period, if the governor has not completed the action(s), they may be automatically removed.
- 5.10. Any governor who has not attended an LGB for 6 months, with or without apologies will be automatically considered for removal at the next LGB meeting, subject to agreement from the chair of governors.
- 5.11. As with suspension, a governor being considered for removal is entitled to attend a governor meeting at which their removal is proposed and make recommendations for the continued appointment.

6. Persons ineligible to be governors

- 6.1. No person shall be qualified to be a governor unless they are aged 18 or over at the date of their election or appointment. No current student of the academy shall be a governor however a current student may be invited to attend a meeting of the governors at the discretion of the governors.
- 6.2. A person shall be disqualified from holding or continuing to hold office as a governor:
 - 6.2.1. If:
 - (a) their estate has been sequestrated and the sequestration has not been discharged, annulled or reduced
 - (b) they are the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order or an interim order
 - 6.2.2. At any time when they are subject to a disqualification order or a disqualification undertaking under the Company Trustees Disqualification Act 1986 or to an order made under section 429(2)(b) of the Insolvency Act 1986 (failure to pay under county court administration order)
 - 6.2.3. If they have been removed from the office of charity trustee or trustee for a charity by an order made by the Charity Commission or the High Court on the grounds of any misconduct or mismanagement in the administration of the charity for which they were responsible or to which they were privy, or which they by their conduct contributed to or facilitated.
 - 6.2.4. At any time when they are:

- (a) included in the list of teachers and workers with children or young persons whose employment is prohibited or restricted under section 1 of the Protection of Children Act 1999; or
 - (b) disqualified from working with children under section 28, 29, 29A and 29B of the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000
- 6.2.5. If they are a person in respect of whom a direction has been made under section 142 of the Education Act 2002
- 6.2.6. Where they have, at any time, been convicted of any criminal offence, excluding any that have been spent under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 as amended, and excluding any offence for which the maximum sentence is a fine or a lesser sentence except where a person has been convicted of any offence which falls under section 178 of the Charities Act 2011.
- 6.2.7. If they have not provided to the Chair of the Trustees a criminal record certificate at an enhanced disclosure level under section 113B of the Police Act 1997. In the event that the certificate discloses any information which would in the opinion of the Chair of the Trustees confirm their unsuitability to work with children that person shall be disqualified. If a dispute arises as to whether a person shall be disqualified, a referral shall be made to the Secretary of State to determine the matter. The determination of the Secretary of State shall be final.
- 6.2.8. A governor shall cease to hold office if they become incapable by reason of mental disorder, illness or injury of managing or administering their own affairs.
- 6.2.9. A governor shall cease to hold office if they are disqualified from acting as a governor by virtue of section 178 of the Charities Act 2011 (or any statutory re-enactment or modification of that provision).
- 6.3. Where a person becomes disqualified from holding or continuing to hold office as a governor and they are, or is proposed, to become such a governor, they shall upon becoming so disqualified give written notice of that fact to the Secretary.
- 6.4. It should be noted that staff who work at the academy for an average of more than one-third of an academy year (i.e. more than 500 hours in total) are only eligible to serve as staff governor at that academy and not in any other category.

7. Term of office

- 7.1. Any governor shall hold and vacate office in accordance with the terms of their appointment but (except in the case of the principal) the length of their term of office shall not exceed four years.
- 7.2. Subject to remaining eligible to act as a chair, a chair may be reappointed or re-elected for up to a maximum of three consecutive terms of office. Once a chair has reached their maximum term of office, they may not be reappointed except in highly exceptional circumstances and only to support a succession plan. Governors can serve as many terms as the LGB agrees but best practice would be no more than three consecutive terms.

8. Conflicts of interest

- 8.1. The income and property of the academy must be applied solely towards the provision of the objects as detailed in the Articles of Association. The restrictions which apply to the Trustees with regard to having a personal financial interest shall also apply to the governors.
- 8.2. The procedure detailed at clause 6.8 of the Articles of Association shall apply to the governing body always provided that, in the case of a personal financial interest for a governor who is not also a Trustee, the governing body may meet to authorise the benefit.
- 8.3. Any governor who has any duty or personal interest (including but not limited to any personal financial interest or perceived interest) which conflicts or may conflict with their duties as a governor shall disclose that fact to the governors as soon as they become aware of it. A governor must absent themselves from any discussions of the governors in which it is possible that a conflict will arise between their duty to act solely in the interests of the academy and any duty or personal interest (including but not limited to any personal financial interest).
- 8.4. Interests should be declared on Governor Hub at least annually during the first term of each new academic year. The clerk should be notified of any change to this declaration throughout the year.
- 8.5. Those serving on local governing bodies are accountable to the Trust Board and must ensure that at all times they act in good faith and in the best interests of the academies and the Trust. Members of the local governing body must comply with the Trust's Business and Pecuniary Interest policy.

9. Appointment of chair and vice-chair

- 9.1. The chair of the local governing body shall be appointed by the chief financial officer of Ormiston Academies Trust and will therefore be an OAT nominee.
- 9.2. The vice-chair of the local governing body shall be appointed by the governing body.
- 9.3. If both the chair and the vice-chair are absent from any meeting of the local governing body, those governors present shall appoint one of their number to chair the meeting.

10. Meetings of local governing body

- 10.1 The local governing body shall meet 4 times a year, with the option to also hold a 'strategy day'. The OAT governance team will provide direction as to the cadence of meetings and core agenda items for each.
- 10.2 All meetings shall be convened by the clerk to the local governing body, who shall send to the governors written notice of the meeting and a copy of the agenda with any supporting papers at least seven clear days in advance of the meeting. The agenda shall be prepared by the clerk to the local governing body using the OAT templates, with input from the principal and chair.

- 10.3 A special meeting of the local governing body shall be called by the clerk whenever requested by the chair, in writing and supported by any three governors. Where there are matters demanding urgent consideration, the chair or, in their absence, the vice-chair may waive the need for seven days' notice of the meeting and substitute such notice as they see fit.
- 10.4 The convening of a meeting and the proceedings conducted shall not be invalidated by reason of any individual not having received written notice of the meeting or a copy of the agenda.
- 10.5 Access to all notices, agendas and minutes of meetings of the local governing body shall be provided to governors via document upload to GovernorHub.

11. Quorum

- 11.1 Meetings of the local governing body shall be quorate if four or one-third of members are present (whichever is greater).
- 11.2 If the number of governors assembled for a meeting of the local governing body does not constitute a quorum, the meeting shall not be held. If in the course of a meeting of the local governing body the number of governors present ceases to constitute a quorum, the meeting shall be terminated forthwith.
- 11.3 If for lack of a quorum a meeting cannot be held or, as the case may be, cannot continue, the chair shall, if they see fit, determine the time and date at which a further meeting shall be held and shall direct the clerk to convene the meeting accordingly.

12. Proceedings of meetings

- 12.1 Every matter to be decided at a meeting of the local governing body shall be determined by a majority of the votes of the governors present and voting on the matter. Every governor shall have one vote. Where there is an equal division of votes the chair of the meeting shall have a second or casting vote.
- 12.2 A governor may not vote by proxy.
- 12.3 No resolution of the governors may be rescinded or varied at a subsequent meeting unless consideration of the rescission or variation is a specific item of business on the agenda for that meeting.
- 12.4 Any governor who is also an employee of the Trust shall withdraw from that part of any meeting of the local governing body at which their remuneration, conditions of service, promotion, conduct, suspension, dismissal or retirement are to be considered.
- 12.5 A resolution in writing, signed by all the governors (or all of the members of a committee of the governors), shall be valid and effective as if it had been passed at a meeting of the governors or (as the case may be) a committee of governors duly convened and held. Such a resolution may consist of several documents in the same form, each signed by one or more of the governors (or the members of a committee, as the case may be).

- 12.6 Any governor shall be able to participate in meetings of the governors by telephone or video conference provided that they have given reasonable notice to the clerk and that the governors have access to the appropriate equipment.

13. Minutes and publication

- 13.1 At every meeting of the local governing body the minutes of the last meeting shall be taken as the first agenda item after any apologies, except in cases where the governors present decide otherwise, and, if agreed to be accurate, shall be accepted as a true record.
- 13.2 The clerk to the local governing body shall ensure that a copy of the agenda for every meeting of the governors, the draft minutes of every such meeting (if they have been approved by the chair of that meeting), the approved minutes of every such meeting and any report, document or other paper considered at any such meeting are, as soon as is reasonably practicable, added to Governor Hub.

14. Delegation of functions and committees

- 14.1 Local governing bodies shall not have the power to establish or maintain formally clerked sub-committees which are not recommended due to the added burden that they place on schools in terms of time and cost. Instead, academies are encouraged to introduce link governor roles as appropriate and through consultation and agreement with the principal.
- 14.2 Joint local governing bodies shall have the power to establish formally clerked sub-committees, but meetings of the joint local governing body and sub-committees combined must not exceed that of the aggregated individual academy local governing body meetings had they taken place.
- 14.3 Nothing in this clause (14) shall prevent the delegation of statutory duties to ad hoc panels or committees as set out in the Scheme of Delegation.