

Governance Policy

Policy Number: HBS056

Trustee Committee: FGB

Author: HC

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Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed in full by the Board of Trustees every 2 years.

The policy was last reviewed and agreed by the Board of Trustees on 18th March 2025
It is due for review in 24 months from the above date.

Signature _____

Date _____

Headteacher

Signature _____

Date _____

Chair of Board of Trustees

Purpose

This is the main governance document for the Governing Board of Hitchin Boys' School, the Board of Trustees. It brings into one document the perspective of all Governance by the Governing Board, including listing of all key matters for decision, and all Policies covered by the Governing Board. It also covers standard procedural and similar issues.

General

1. The Governing Board (the Board of Trustees) has legal responsibility and control over all matters concerning the school. All matters relating to the Governing Board, including the eligibility of Trustees, procedures for election or appointment of Trustees and office-holders, and all aspects of the operation of the Governing Board are governed by its Instrument of Government, this Governance Policy and the statutory requirements as set out in the Governance Handbook (DfE).. If there is any conflict between these, then the Governance Handbook shall prevail and the Governing Board will take steps to amend the Instrument of Government and/or Governance Policy accordingly. The procedures of the Governing Board, if not specified in this Policy, shall be those set out in the prevailing Governance Handbook or, if not specified there, shall be those followed by the Governing Board before March 2023 until or unless a decision is made to adopt new procedures.

2. In respect of the roles of the Governing Board, its Committees and the Head Teacher and staff, the Governing Board shall be guided by the following documents published by the Department for Education:

- i. The Governance Handbook
- ii. Competency framework for governance
- iii. Academy Trust Handbook
- iv. The 'Governing Board Decision Planner' recommended by the DfE. A copy of this is attached as Annex 1, annotated for the agreed decision-making arrangements of the Governing Board.

3. Responsibility and authority for the day-to-day management of the school is delegated to the Head Teacher, subject to the strategy of the School agreed by the Governing Board and the Governing Board's procedures for monitoring and review. Given the complexity and range of administrative and organisational skills required, the Head Teacher may delegate responsibility for a particular area of operation to another member of the Senior Leadership Team or to another member of staff.

Elections and Terms of Office

Chair and Vice-Chair

4. When there is a vacancy or the term of office of the incumbent has ended, the elections (or re-elections) of the Chair and/or Vice-Chair shall take place.

5. The term of office of the Chair shall be one year.

6. If the post of Chair or Vice-Chair becomes vacant during the school year an election for the vacant Chair/Vice-Chair post will be held at the next meeting of the Governing Board, with a term of office set as the remainder of the school year and until no later than the first meeting of the Governing Board in the subsequent Autumn Term.

7. Any Trustee may stand for election as Chair or Vice-Chair, and their nomination or self-nomination as a candidate should be circulated to other Trustees with the agenda for the meeting not less than seven days in advance of the meeting. If no nominations are circulated with the agenda, nominations and self-nominations may be accepted at the meeting itself.

Specialist Advisers

8. The Governing Board has power to appoint Specialist Advisers to its committees. Specialist Advisers who are members of staff may not be members of the Audit, Risk and Resources Committee. Specialist Advisers, when appointed, shall hold office for the remainder of the school year and until no later than the second meeting of the Governing Board in the subsequent Autumn Term, and may be re-appointed annually. Specialist Advisers may not vote in meetings of the Governing Board. Specialist Advisers may vote in Committee, at the discretion of the Governing Board.

Operation

9. The full Governing Board meets a minimum of four times, and maximum of six times, a year. Trustees must be afforded the opportunity to scrutinise the monthly management accounts at least six times per year. These are also made available via the Governor Hub portal. Meetings shall be scheduled to ensure an efficient pattern of the necessary decision-making and to ensure that the Governing Board fully discharges its duties in respect of its strategic role, its role in monitoring and evaluation and in acting as a 'critical friend' to the Head Teacher.

10. The Governing Board has five main committees and two further sub-committees: Audit, Risk & Resources, Teaching & Learning, Pastoral, Health, Safety & Premises, Chairs' Steering Group plus the two sub-committees, Admissions Committee and Pay & Performance Committee. Each committee and sub-committee will meet as outlined in their respective Terms of Reference,

The Chairs' Steering Group will be constituted as in §27 below: Members of the Committees will be directly appointed by the Governing Board on an annual basis at the first or second meeting of the Governing Board in the academic year or otherwise as required in the case of a vacancy arising. Decisions may be made by the relevant Committee where the Governing Board has delegated those decisions to them.

In other matters a Committee may make proposals or recommendations or provide suggested options for consideration by the Governing Board. The discussions and decisions of the Committees are minuted and reported to the Governing Board for approval with the exception of the Chairs' Steering Group where only decisions, proposals and recommendations may be reported to the Governing Board (see §27 below).

A schedule of meetings will be published annually for the forthcoming academic year.

11. The Governing Board and each of its Committees will review at least once per year the training which may be appropriate for its members to fulfil their roles.

All completed training will be recorded on trustee profiles on Governor Hub, and all certifications sent electronically or in hard copy to the School Business Manager.

12. All Trustees will declare any perceived, potential or actual conflicts of interest on Governor Hub and will not vote or take part in any debate relating to that issue. The Governing Board and each of its Committees will ensure that no decision is taken in which there is, or could be thought to be, a conflict of interest by any Trustees voting.

i. Specialist Advisers who are members of staff may participate in discussions regarding other staff-related, student-related and student disciplinary issues. It is recognised that this could raise questions or perceptions of conflict of interest and therefore Specialist Advisers who are members of staff may not vote where such questions or perceptions arise.

ii. Parent Trustees may participate in discussion on staff or student related issues and vote on them. Where the issues involve personal friends or relate directly to their own children at the school they may not vote.

iii. No Trustee shall vote or participate in debate on any business linked to their employment or to any commercial interest they or their close family may have.

iv. If there is any unresolved question as to whether an issue may give rise to a potential conflict of interest or a perception of conflict of interest, it is to be resolved by a simple majority vote among those Trustees present. Any Trustee who is a subject of the unresolved question may not vote.

Operation of Committees

13. Each main committee will consist of at least FOUR Trustees. One Specialist Adviser who is a member of staff may be a member of the Pastoral, Teaching & Learning or Health, Safety & Premises Committee. They may not be a member of the Audit, Risk and Resources Committee.

The Head Teacher will be an ex-officio member of each main committee. The Chair of Trustees (or in the absence of the Chair, the Vice-Chair) will be an ex-officio member of the Teaching and Learning Committee, but cannot be a member of the Audit, Risk and Resources (ARR) Committee. Notwithstanding this, the Chair of Trustees may be invited to be in attendance at parts of ARR Committee meetings at critical points in the year.

14. Each committee may, if it so wishes, invite relevant staff members to attend Committee meetings either on a regular or an ad hoc basis, for the purpose of assisting in the conduct of the Committee's business.

15. At the first meeting of a Committee in the school year a Chair and a Vice-Chair shall be appointed from among the Trustees who are members of the Committee. The Vice-Chair will conduct the business of the Committee meetings in the absence of the Chair. The Committee shall also appoint a Clerk. If a vacancy arises among these officers at any time, the Committee will appoint a replacement. The Governing Board may also appoint a replacement for any member leaving the Committee.

16. Terms of Reference for committees will be updated annually, and presented at the first meeting of any school year. Quora will be set out in the Terms of Reference for each committee.

17. Each main committee will meet at least once per term, at times appropriate to the work of the committee, where possible in advance of the full Governing Board meetings. Meetings will be convened by the Clerk of the Committee, who will be responsible for ensuring that the meeting is chaired. If neither the Chair nor the Vice-Chair is available for it, the meeting would normally be postponed, though in cases of urgency it may be chaired by the Chair or Vice-Chair of the Governing Board or, at the direction of the Chair of the Governing Board, any other Trustee. Any Trustee so directed shall be regarded as a member of the Committee for that meeting.

18. All Trustees who are members of the committee shall be entitled to vote. A Specialist Adviser who is a member of the Committee and is authorised may also vote. The Chair (or Trustee acting as Chair at the meeting) shall have an additional casting vote where the vote is tied.

19. The Clerk will carry out the required duties of the Clerk including calling meetings, circulating the agenda and relevant papers at least 7 days before a meeting. The Clerk will ensure that any decisions or recommendations of the Committee that may involve consequent decisions of other Committees or the Governing Board are promptly conveyed to them. The Clerk may be assisted by a member of staff in the preparation of agendas and minutes

20. Minutes of the meeting will be made to record the names of those attending, time and place, and any substantive discussion, debate, challenge, decision, action points or recommendations to be made to the Governing Board, clearly indicating which of these are decisions and which are recommendations.

21. Recommendations must be framed in such a way as to offer the Governing Board clear proposals or alternatives to debate and decide upon.

22. Minutes will be circulated to:

- The Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee within ten days after the meeting for approval.
- Other members of the Committee and to other Committee Chairs within twenty one days after the meeting.
- All other Trustees with the agenda for the next Main Board meeting
- All minutes will be posted onto Governor Hub within twenty one days after the meeting

23. The Committee will work under the division of responsibilities and the procedures set out in this document, and shall review its Terms of Reference at the first meeting of the Committee in the school year, and submit its reviewed Terms of Reference to the next meeting of the Governing Board for approval.

24. The Committee will consider matters as included in the agenda and/or as directed by the Chair of Trustees and take advice when and as appropriate from the Head Teacher.

Operation in cases of urgency

25. The Chair shall have the power provided in the Governance Handbook to act in matters of urgency. Whenever practicable and appropriate, however, the Chair will seek to obtain the views of the Governing Board on any urgent action he/she proposes, through circulating the proposal for action by the school's e-mail system. The details of any decision taken by the Chair as a matter of urgency shall be recorded as a note on the agenda of the next following meeting of the full Governing Board. At its discretion the Governing Board may also decide to use the same e-mail procedure for consultation in respect of any other of its responsibilities.

Discharge of Responsibilities

26. The full Governing Board shall consider all issues specified for it under the Governance Handbook. It will delegate to its Committees relevant issues to be considered there, in accordance with the Terms of Reference of those Committees, as agreed by the Governing Board, and the 'Decision Planner' schedule below. The Governing Board shall, however, have the option at its discretion to consider and decide on any issue except those disciplinary issues where the Governing Board must act through its Committee. The full Governing Board shall, with the advice of any relevant Committee, consider, and review annually, any issue which raises questions of how the school can satisfactorily comply with regulations and obligations placed upon it.

The Chairs' Steering Group

27. The Chairs' Steering Group consists of the Chair of Trustees, the immediate past Chair of Trustees, the Vice-Chair of Trustees, the Chairs of the Audit, Risk and Resources, Teaching & Learning, Pastoral, and Health, Safety & Premises Committees and the Head Teacher. The Group's main roles shall be to:

- i. Give further consideration to key issues identified by the Governing Board and/or the Headteacher and develop thoughts, ideas and proposals to be considered by the Governing Board
- ii. Discuss informally issues that relate to more than one Committee, with a view to co-ordination and facilitation of the work of the Governing Board.
- iii. Act as a working group to ensure that longer-term strategy issues and 'Blue-Sky' issues are considered and developed and brought to the Governing Board in a way that enables the Governing Board to have an effective discussion on them.
- iv. Act as a working group in respect of any Inspection of the School.

28. The Group will normally be informal in procedure and approach. The basis of it shall be to ensure cohesion in the work of the Committees and the Governing Board, and to progress the approach taken in the various annual and periodic reviews of governance. The Governing Board may however delegate to the Chairs' Steering Group any decision that is not specifically reserved for the whole Governing Board. Any such decisions taken by the Group shall be minuted and reported to the Governing Board.

29. The Chairs' Steering Group may co-opt other Trustees who could contribute to its effectiveness and to that of the Governing Board. Such co-options would generally be ad hoc, to cover specific issues or objectives, and informal, so that it would make good use of the interest and expertise of those Governors for the specific projects or tasks of the Group, and the co-option would end when those tasks had been completed. Where appropriate the Chairs' Steering Group may also invite

others, such as members of the teaching staff, who may have specific knowledge or expertise which may be valuable to the work of the Group.

Amendments to this Policy

30. The attached Decision Planner shall be an integral part of this Policy, setting out the delegation and scheme of decision-making agreed by the Governing Board. Any changes to this Policy and the Decision Planner shall require a decision of the Governing Board.

School policies and other documents

31. The School's 'Policies and other documents', including those that governing bodies are required to have by law, are listed in the Terms of Reference for each Committee

| Annex 1: Area | Decision | Delegation | | | | |
|----------------------|--|------------|------------|-----------|--------------------|-------------|
| | | Members | Main Board | Committee | Individual trustee | Headteacher |
| Governance framework | | | | | | |
| People | Members: Appoint/Remove | ✓ | | | | |
| | Trustees: Appoint/Remove | ✓ | ✓ | | | |
| | Role descriptions for members | ✓ | | | | |
| | Role descriptions for trustees/chair/ specific roles/committee members: agree | | ✓ | <A | | |
| | Parent trustee: elected | | ✓ | | | |
| | Committee chairs: appoint and remove | | ✓ | <A | | |
| | Clerk to board: appoint and remove | | ✓ | | | |
| | Articles of association: agree and review | ✓ | <A | <A | | |

| Annex 1: Area | Decision | Delegation | | | | |
|------------------------|---|------------|------------|----------------------|--------------------|-------------|
| | | Members | Main Board | Committee | Individual trustee | Headteacher |
| Systems and structures | Governance structure (committees) for the trust: establish and review annually | ✓ | ✓ | <A | | |
| | Terms of reference for trust committees (including audit if required, and scheme of delegation): agree annually | | ✓ | <A All committees | | |
| | Skills audit: complete and recruit to fill gaps | | ✓ | | | |
| | Annual self review of trust board and committee performance: complete annually | | ✓ | | | |
| | Chairs' performance: carry out 360 review periodically | | ✓ | | | |
| | Trustee contribution: review annually | | ✓ | | | |
| | Succession: plan | | ✓ | <A | | |
| | Annual schedule of business for trust board: agree | | ✓ | <A | | <A |
| Reporting | | | | | | |

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|------------------|--|------------|------------|--------------|--------------------|-------------|
| | | Members | Main Board | Committee | Individual trustee | Headteacher |
| Reporting | Trust governance details on trust website: ensure | | ✓ | <A | <A | <A |
| | Register of all interests, business, pecuniary, loyalty for members/trustees: establish and publish | | ✓ | <A | | |
| | Annual report on performance of the trust: submit to members and publish | | ✓ | <A ARR | | |
| | Annual report and accounts including accounting policies, signed statement on regularity, propriety and compliance, incorporating governance statement demonstrating value for money: submit | | ✓ | <A ARR | | |
| | To determine whether to publish a home school agreement (not statutory) | | | < A Pastoral | | ✓ |
| | Overall responsibility for ensuring that statutory requirements for information published on the school website, including required details of governance arrangements, performance, financial and equality data are met | | ✓ | <A | <A | <A |

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|------------------|--|------------|------------|----------------------|--------------------|-------------|
| | | Members | Main Board | Committee | Individual trustee | Headteacher |
| | To publish and update at least annually a SEND information report (meeting requirements set out in the Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014) | | ✓ | ✓ Pastoral | | ✓ |
| Being Strategic | | | | | | |
| Being Strategic | Determine trust policies which reflect the trust's ethos and values including: admissions; expenses; data protection and FOI; SEN, safeguarding and child protection and curriculum, : approve | | ✓ | <A All committees | | <A |
| | Determine trust staffing policies which reflect the trust's ethos and values including appraisal, capability, discipline, conduct and grievance: approve | | ✓ | <A ARR | | <A |
| | Determine trust policy for complaints, health and safety, accessibility plan, premises management, data protection and FOI: approve | | ✓ | ✓ ARR | | <A |
| | Establish trust policy for sex education, careers guidance | | | T&L | | ✓ |

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|------------------|--|------------|------------|----------------|--------------------|-------------|
| | | Members | Main Board | Committee | Individual trustee | Headteacher |
| | Determine a behaviour and discipline policy that promotes good behaviour among pupils and defines the sanctions to be adopted where pupils misbehave | | ✓ | <A Pastoral | | <A |
| | To draft content of school behaviour policy and publicise it to staff, students and parents. | | | Pastoral | | ✓ |
| | To annually determine admission arrangements and to carry out consultation where changes are proposed, or where the governing board has not consulted on their arrangements in the last seven years. | | ✓ | | | |
| | Ensure a broad and balanced curriculum is in place | | ✓ | <A T&L | | <A |
| | To set the times of school sessions and the dates of school terms and holidays | | ✓ | | | |
| | Agree enrichment/extra-curricular offer including any additional services required | | ✓ | ✓ T&L | | <A |

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|------------------|---|------------|------------|-----------|--------------------|-------------|
| | | Members | Main Board | Committee | Individual trustee | Headteacher |
| | Imbed agreed curriculum and enrichment offer within the day-to-day operation of the academy trust | | | | | ✓ |
| | To establish and agree a Pay policy | | ✓ | ✓ ARR | | |
| | Management of risk: establish register, review and monitor | | ✓ | <A ARR | ✓ | <A |
| | Engagement with stakeholders | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| | Trust's vision and strategy, agreeing key priorities and key performance indicators (KPIs) against which progress towards achieving the vision can be measured: determine | ✓ | ✓ | <A | | <A |
| | Principal: Appoint and dismiss | | ✓ | | | |
| | To decide whether to join or form a multi-academy trust | ✓ | ✓ | | | |
| | Budget plan to support delivery of trust key priorities: agree | | ✓ | <A | | |

| Annex 1: Area | Decision | Delegation | | | | |
|--------------------|---|------------|------------|------------------------|--------------------|-------------|
| | | Members | Main Board | Committee | Individual trustee | Headteacher |
| | | | | ARR | | |
| | Academy staffing structure: agree | | ✓ | <A ARR | | <A |
| | Appoint teaching staff | | A> | | | ✓ |
| | Appoint non-teaching staff | | | | | ✓ |
| Holding to account | | | | | | |
| Holding to account | Auditing and reporting arrangements for matters of compliance (eg safeguarding, H&S, employment): agree | | ✓ | <A ARR /Pastoral | <A | <A |
| | To produce and maintain a central record of recruitment and vetting checks | | | | | ✓ |

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| | | Members | Main Board | Committee | Individual trustee | Headteacher |
| | To have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism and to oversee the incorporation of the necessary procedures and practices outlined in the <i>Prevent</i> duty into the child protection policy | | ✓ | < A Pastoral | <A | <A |
| | Reporting arrangements for progress on key priorities: agree | | ✓ | ✓ All committees | | <A |
| | Performance management of the Principal: undertake | | ✓ | | | |
| | Performance management of staff: undertake | | | | | ✓ |
| | Establish and review procedures for addressing staff discipline, conduct and grievance | | ✓ | <A✓ ARR | | |
| | Trustee monitoring: agree arrangements | | ✓ | <A | | |

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|----------------------------|--|------------|------------|-----------|--------------------|-------------|
| | | Members | Main Board | Committee | Individual trustee | Headteacher |
| | To review all permanent exclusions and fixed term exclusions where the pupil is either excluded for more than 15 days in a term or would lose the opportunity to sit a public examination. | | | ✓ | | |
| | To ensure that health and safety regulations are followed | | | | | ✓ |
| | Ensure that school lunch nutritional standards are met | | | | | ✓ |
| | Maintain a register of pupil attendance | | | | | ✓ |
| | To ensure provision of free meals to those pupils meeting the criteria, including Universal Infant Free School Meals (if applicable) | | | | | ✓ |
| Ensuring financial probity | | | | | | |
| | Chief financial officer for delivery of trusts detailed accounting processes: appoint | | ✓ | <A | | |
| | Trust's scheme of financial delegation: establish and review | | ✓ | <A | <A | <A |
| | External auditors' report: receive and respond | | ✓ | <A | | <A |

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| | | Members | Main Board | Committee | Individual trustee | Headteacher |
| Ensuring financial probity | | | | ARR | | |
| | Principal pay award: agree | | ✓ | ARR | | |
| | Staff appraisal procedure and pay progression: monitor and agree | | ✓ | <A ARR | | <A |
| | Benchmarking and academy trust value for money: ensure robustness | | ✓ | <A ARR | | |
| | Develop trust procurement strategies and efficiency savings programme | | | ✓ ARR | | |
| | To approve the first formal budget plan each financial year | | ✓ | <A ARR | | |
| | To agree annual action plans and monitor how school premiums are spent (i.e. PE and sports premium, Year 7 numeracy and maths catch up premium, service premium and the pupil premium) | | ✓ | ✓ T&L | | |

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|------------------|---|------------|------------|------------|--------------------|-------------|
| | | Members | Main Board | Committee | Individual trustee | Headteacher |
| | To establish and agree charging and remissions policy | | ✓ | ✓ ARR | | |
| | Buildings insurance and personal liability | | ✓ | < A ARR | | |