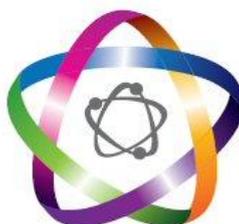


POLICY DOCUMENT No G01**DEBENHAM HIGH SCHOOL**

A Church of England High Performing Specialist Academy



**The Role of Governors and Members of the Academy Trust
Terms of Reference of the Governing Body's Committees and
Working Parties**

This policy is reviewed annually in the autumn term

History of Document

Issue No	Author/Owner	Date Written	Approved by Governors on	Comments
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Issue 1A	Richard Boulter	18/9/12	9 Oct 2012	Amended Committee Structure
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Annex A – Code of Conduct for Debenham High School Governors

1 Introduction

The aim of this document is to give Members of the Academy Trust, Governors, teachers and support staff an indication of how the Members of the Academy Trust and Governors at Debenham High School hope to fulfil their responsibilities to the school. Further information can be found in the Governance Handbook available through the Gov.UK website.

It identifies the Terms of Reference of the committees and working parties that have been established and lists any special responsibilities for individual Governors, with suggestions how they might carry them out. In general, committees are delegated to make and take decisions on behalf of the Governing Body whereas working parties are expected to meet to make recommendations to a full Governing Body meeting. Final approval for school policies, including reviews, rests with the whole Governing Body or delegated committees

The Governing Body manages the Academy on behalf of the Members of the Academy Trust. The core functions are:

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
- Holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils, and the performance management of staff;
- Overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent. and
- To employ staff.

2 The Academy Trust

Debenham High School was established as an Academy Trust on January 1st, 2011, converting from Debenham Church of England Voluntary Controlled High School under the Academies Act 2010. The Academy Trust is a company limited by guarantee and an exempt charity. The company's Memorandum and Articles of Association (13th December 2010) is the primary governing document of the Academy Trust. A governing structure of six independent Members (including the Chair of Governors ex officio) and eighteen Governors was set up to oversee the Academy. The Governors are the Directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law and act as Trustees for the purposes of charities legislation.

2.1 The Role of Members of the Academy Trust

Information regarding the role of academy members is contained within the Governance Handbook and Academies Financial Handbook.

The Members have accountability for ensuring that the Academy Trust meets the stated purpose for which it exists as detailed within the Memorandum and Articles of Association. They expect to meet formally twice each year.

The Members' meeting should take note of:

- Staff changes. The responsibility for the employment of staff is delegated to the Governing Body and the Headteacher.
- A statement of the financial position and confirmation of insurance details.
- A statement of the effective use of the building and school land.

- A statement about school admissions.
- A statement about future plans/aspirations for the school.
- Any other matter relating to the school which Members wish to consider.
- Any planning which might be necessary for the Annual General Meeting.
- Any legal or financial documents which may need to be submitted.

Members should receive all documents sent to Governors for Governing Body meetings, which they are entitled to attend. They have speaking rights but no voting rights. Members may be invited to attend Governor's committee and working party meetings.

2.2 Composition of the Trust

The Academy Trust consists of:

- 1 Member nominated by the Diocesan Board of Education.
- The Chair of Governors ex officio.
- 4 Members who signed the original Memorandum and Articles of Association.

Except for the Diocesan Board of Education nominee and the Chair of Governors, the term of office for Members of the Academy Trust is 5 years. It is possible for former Members to be co-opted on to the Governing Body when vacancies arise.

3 The Role of Governors

Governors as Directors are responsible for the formulation of policy, financial management, and holding the school to account for the delivery of the academy's objectives.

Governors will normally meet as a Governing Body at least once each term, and usually twice. The Governing Body's main focus will be on maintaining and improving the high standards of education and behaviour in the school; monitoring its performance and providing challenge; overseeing the school's financial and property management; employment of all staff on behalf of the Trust. Governors do not run the school; that is the responsibility of the Head and the staff. Governors set the direction and the policies of the school and hold the Head and other members of the Senior Leadership Team to account.

Governors will be expected to:

- Set the general "direction" of the school, its aims and aspirations.
- Be advocates and ambassadors for the school.
- Agree a budget annually and remain well briefed on the school's financial state.
- Approve the annual Teachers' Pay Award.
- Agree annually an Improvement and Development Plan. Oversee the school curriculum and agree any significant changes to the broad, balanced and relevant curriculum offered.
- Set appropriate targets for the school.
- Agree staffing numbers and take part in the appointment of senior staff as appropriate.
- Treat all information provided to Governors as strictly confidential – though minutes of Governing Body meetings are made available on the school website.
- Attend regularly meetings of committees or working parties as agreed.

- Take a particular interest in one or more Faculties/Departments in the school in order to act as a spokesperson/advocate if necessary and take a strategic part in the annual Faculty/Departmental Review.
- Declare any pecuniary interest in any item under discussion and withdraw from active participation in any decision-making regarding this item.
- Help determine the Agenda by speaking with the Chair to raise items at least two weeks before meetings.
- Help maintain the Christian ethos on which the school has been founded.
- Ensure that the Headteacher has appropriate, challenging and regular performance management reviews.
- Be the arbiter in disputes or complaints from staff, pupils or parents.
- Decide the Published Admission Number and make decisions regarding admissions.
- Agree an appeals process for admissions.
- Agree and monitor a policy on pupil behaviour and institute a fair exclusions procedure and an appeal process.
- Ensure that documents are prepared for an Annual General Meeting.
- Ensure that the Annual Report and Financial Statements are prepared.
- Ensure that all financial and other documents which may be required by the Department for Education are prepared and returned efficiently and punctually.
- Approve all school policies and significant policy changes.
- Hold the Headteacher to account.

It is vitally important that the Headteacher is held to account. As an Academy, the school is independent of the Local Authority and there is no safety net other than the Governing Body. Governors will need to ask probing questions of the Headteacher and obtain professional help in the Headteacher's performance management. Governors must also ensure that the senior leadership team are all appropriately challenged by the Headteacher and that they have robust and challenging performance management reviews.

- In fulfilling the above expectations Governors acknowledge the Code of Conduct at Annex A to this document.

3.1 Composition of the Governing Body

Debenham High School is a Church of England High Performing Specialist Academy and the Governing Body has the following composition as laid down in the Articles of Association:

- five elected parent Governors.
- one nominated Local Authority Governor.
- two elected teaching staff Governors.
- one elected non-teaching staff Governor.
- one ex officio foundation Governor, the rector of Debenham and Helmingham.
- one foundation Governor appointed by the Parochial Church Council of the Parish of St Mary Magdalene, Debenham.

- two foundation Governors appointed by the Diocesan Board of Education.
- two Governors co-opted by the Members of the Academy Trust.
- two Governors co-opted by the whole Governing Body.
- the Headteacher ex-officio.

3.2 Election of Chair and Vice-Chair

Every year at the first meeting of the autumn term the Governing Body elects a Chair and vice-Chair.

3.3 Full Governing Body Meetings

At least one, but normally two full Governing Body meeting are held each term. They are normally held at 5pm on a Tuesday in the school and it is anticipated that they will not last any longer than 2 hours. All Governors are expected to attend but if they are unable to attend a particular meeting they should inform the Clerk, the Headteacher or another Governor who will present their apologies. The agenda and papers relevant to the meeting will be sent out by the clerk two weeks prior to the meeting. It is hoped that Governors will read all the documentation prior to the meeting and come to it prepared with any questions or comments.

Governing Body meetings are normally also attended by Deputy, Assistant Headteachers and Business Manager who take part in any discussions but do not have voting rights. Members of the Academy Trust are welcome to attend and contribute but do not have a vote. When appropriate the Headteacher may invite other members of staff and/or students to attend part of the meeting.

As specified in the School's Articles of Association, a quorum for a meeting of Governors, and any vote on any matter at a meeting shall be any three Governors or where greater, any one third (rounded up to a whole number) of the total number of Governors holding office at the time of the meeting.

4 Committees and Working Parties

The following committees and working parties shall be maintained. The difference between a committee and a working party is that the committees are empowered to make decisions on behalf of the Governing Body whereas working parties only make recommendations. Committees report their decisions and working parties their recommendations to the next full Governing Body meeting.

A quorum for a committee of Governors, and any vote on any matter at a meeting shall be any three Governors or where greater, any one third (rounded up to a whole number) of the total number of Governors assigned to the committee at the time of the meeting. Governors must form a majority of the attendees at any committee or working party.

Members of committees and working parties are confirmed every four years but may be reviewed periodically to ensure necessary skills and experience is appropriate to the committee. Ad hoc working parties are formed as and when required.

4.1 Admissions Committee

Membership: Headteacher and 5-7 Non-staff Governors, at least 3 are to be present at a meeting.

Chair:	Any member.
In Attendance:	Deputy Headteacher.
Clerk:	Deputy Headteacher.
Meetings:	As required (most entry decisions confirmed by e-mail).
Responsible for:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues relating to the entry of pupils to the school (including mid-term admissions). • Agreeing the annual schedule for notifying the determination of admission arrangements to all relevant parties. • Agreeing an Admission Policy for approval by the Governing Body. • Determining whether a pupil can be admitted when the year is full.

4.2 Appeals Committee

Membership:	4-6 Non-staff Governors including the Vice-Chair.
Chair:	Vice-Chair of Governors.
In Attendance:	Headteacher and relevant staff. Staff members will be asked to leave when the Committee considers the salaries of staff or any other matter considered to be sensitive and confidential in nature or where a conflict of interest is possible.
Clerk:	Clerk to Governors.
Meetings:	As required.
Responsible for:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appeals arising from Discipline and Grievance Cases. • Appeals against Dismissal arising from Capability Cases. • Appeals arising from selection for Redundancy. • Appeals against Dismissal arising from failure to complete probation.

4.3 Finance & General Purposes Committee (FGPC)

Membership:	The Chair of Governors, Headteacher and 4-6 other Governors. At least 3 are to be present at a meeting.
Chair:	Any governor.
Clerk:	Clerk to Governors. Agenda and papers are circulated by email one week before the meeting whenever possible.
In Attendance:	Deputy Head, Bursar, Business Manager.
Meetings:	At least once a term; twice in budget-setting terms.

Responsible for: The FGPC is a committee of the Full Governing Body with delegated responsibility for four key purposes: Finance, Premises, Personnel & Pay and Audit. The FGPC also considers and reviews GDPR policy.

Finance. As a Finance Committee to ensure sound management of the academy's finances and resources, including proper planning, monitoring and probity in line with the EFSA guidelines in the Financial Handbook and Accounts Direction documents.

- Specific Responsibilities:
- To consider and monitor regularly the academy's short term and long-term revenue and capital budget and financial planning to ensure the academy's long-term sustainability.
 - To monitor and review expenditure on a regular basis and ensure compliance with the overall financial plan for the academy, and with the financial regulations of the EFSA, drawing any matters of concern to the attention of the governing body.
 - To consider the academy's indicative funding, notified annually by the EFSA and to assess implications for the academy in advance of the financial year, drawing any matters of significance or concern to the attention of the governing body.
 - To consider and recommend approval/non-approval of the academy's budget to the Full Governing Body.
 - To contribute to the formulation of the academy's development plan, through the consideration of financial priorities and proposals.
 - To receive and consider the broad budget headings and areas of expenditure to be adopted each year, including the level and use of any contingency fund or balances, ensuring the compatibility of all such proposals with the development priorities set out in the development plan.
 - To review and update the Scheme of Financial Responsibility.
 - To review and approve any virements and other transactions in accordance with the Record of Financial Responsibility and Scheme of Delegation.
 - To review and update all financial policies in accordance with the policy review schedule.
 - To review and agree charges for school services, including but not limited to school meals, music tuition and the hire of school premises.
 - To ensure the preparation of the Governors' report and financial statements to form part of the annual report and financial statements of Debenham High School for filing in accordance with Companies Act and Charity Commission requirements.
 - To review and approve annually the school's scheme of delegation.

Premises. As a Premises Committee to ensure sound management of the academy's premises including maintaining the fabric of the building and to consider and plan for the future development of the premises.

- Specific Responsibilities:
- To monitor the usage, condition and adequacy of the school's land and buildings.

- To receive and consider recommendations for expenditure from the Health and Safety committee with regard to premises matters.
- To review and update the school letting policy in accordance with the policy review schedule including the scale of charges.
- To receive and consider the Building Maintenance/Development Plan.
- To approve the appointment of Building Contractors for major works.
- To consider and approve improvements to the buildings and land.
- To consider and recommend to the Full Governing Body the purchase or lease of additional land or the expansion of the buildings.
- To recommend major building and maintenance projects to the Governing Body.

Personnel and Pay. As a Personnel and Pay Committee to review and plan staffing with due regard to financial aspects.

- To establish and keep under regular review the staffing structure and staffing levels. Any proposed changes to be agreed using appropriate timescale.
- To establish a Salary Policy for all categories of staff and to be responsible for its administration and review.
- Agree the salaries of SLT.
- Agree any staff bonuses.
- To establish and review a Performance Management policy and capability procedure for all staff.
- To oversee the process leading to staff reductions.
- To ensure appropriate attention is given to staff work/life balance, working conditions and well-being, including the monitoring of absence.
- To consider personnel related expenditure in the light of financial constraints and future financial planning.

Audit. As an Audit Committee to undertake such activities as deemed necessary in order to provide assurance to the governing body regarding the management and identification of risk and to provide assurance to the governing body regarding the sound management and control of the school finances and other resources.

- To appoint an Internal Auditor on behalf of the Governing Body.
- To receive, consider and respond to regular reports from the Internal Auditor on the effectiveness of the internal controls.
- To review on at least an annual basis the risks faced by the school and to challenge and approve the associated risk management plan.
- To recommend to the full governing body the appointment or reappointment of the auditors.
- To review the findings of the external auditors and agree any action plan arising from it.
- To review and consider the auditor's management letter in order to ensure it is based on a good understanding of the school's business

and to establish whether any recommendations have been acted upon.

4.4 Health and Safety Committee

Membership:	6-8 Governors.
Chair:	Any governor.
In Attendance:	Business Manager, Caretaker, Health & Safety Coordinator
Clerk:	Clerk to Governors.
Meetings:	Termly.
Responsible for:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Instigating action on emergency safety issues.• Carrying out an annual safety inspection, generally in the spring term, and reporting its findings to the Governing Body.• Advising the Governing Body on all issues relating to Health, Safety and Security.

4.5 Hearings & Discipline Committee

Membership:	8 Non-staff Governors from which at least 3 are to attend a hearing. For meetings held solely for a pupil subject to a second exclusion, only two governors are required to be present.
Chair:	Any governor.
In Attendance:	Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher and Assistant Headteacher Pastoral.
Clerk:	Clerk to Governors.
Meetings:	As required
Responsible for:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Personnel Discipline and Grievance Hearings.• Personnel Capability Hearings.• Completion of Teacher Probation.• Selection for Redundancy.• Curriculum Complaints.• Other Complaints.

- Reviewing ¹ and/or considering the Headteacher's decision to exclude a pupil for more than 5 consecutive days or in other circumstances as set out in the statutory guidance ².
- Warning pupils after 2 exclusions.
- Considering representations from parents in the case of second or third exclusions in the circumstances set out in the statutory guidance ³.
- Considering the outcome of, or recommendation made by, any independent review panel hearing.

4.6 Curriculum Working Party

Membership:	All Governors and Trust Members.
Chair:	Headteacher.
In Attendance:	Deputy and Assistant Headteacher (Curriculum).
Clerk:	Any governor.
Meetings:	Termly.
Responsible for:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussing all matters relating to the curriculum and general running of the school. • Making recommendations to the Governing Body.

5 Individual Governor's Roles

All Governors are expected to take an active interest in the school and not restrict their involvement to attending Governing Body meetings. They should see themselves as ambassadors for the school and give it their full support whenever appropriate. It is hoped that Governors will be able to participate in some of the following:

- attend Commemorative Assembly.
- act as an ambassador for a subject area.
- attend school plays/concerts.
- attend faculty reviews.

¹ DfE guidance is that the exercise of review involves consideration of whether a decision to exclude a pupil was lawful, reasonable and procedurally fair.

See: "Exclusion from maintained schools, Academies and pupil referral units in England: A guide for those with legal responsibilities in relation to exclusion" published in September 2017.

² See Annex A of the above DfE guidance which provides a summary and flowchart of the governing body's duties to review the Head teacher's exclusion decision.

³ The HDC must consider the representations of the parents/carers. It will also consider the representations of the pupil as well as the Statement of Principles, the contents of the Positive Management of Behaviour policy and relevant statutory guidance.

- help with recruitment interviews.
- visit the school during school time at least once a year.
- help with out-of-school activities where appropriate.

Governors should bring any concerns about the school to the attention of the Headteacher or Chair of Governors, rather than discussing them with individual members of staff or pupils.

In addition to their general roles the following have specific roles to carry out.

5.1 Chair

The Chair of Governors is responsible for chairing all full Governing Body meetings. For these meetings the Chair will:

- agree the agenda with the Headteacher and the clerk before the meeting.
- with the Headteacher try to ensure that Governors receive all necessary documentation for the meeting 2 weeks in advance of the meeting.
- ensure that the meeting starts on time and that it does not exceed 2 hours.
- ensure that the meeting is conducted in a good humoured and convivial atmosphere.
- ensure during the meeting that all Governors are given an opportunity to express their views.
- try to obtain a unanimous decision when appropriate.
- when views differ within the Governing Body, ensure that a majority decision is taken by a show of hands (only resorting to a secret ballot when specifically requested).
- ensure that the meeting is conducted in an open and honest manner.

Whilst it is hoped that all Governors will have regular contact with the school, it is vitally important that the Chair of Governors should do so. He should try not to go into Governors' meetings without a good background on all the subjects to be discussed. This can only be achieved by regular discussions with the Headteacher who, it is hoped, will keep the chair informed of all important issues, both good and bad, that occur within the school. A meeting with the Headteacher at least every two weeks would be appropriate.

The Chair should, when possible and when appropriate, also support the Headteacher at various meetings, for example parent evenings such as the new intake evening.

5.2 Vice-Chair

The only specific role that is carried out by the Vice-Chair is to be prepared to step into the Chair's role in the Chair's absence: for example, chairing the Governing Body meeting or, in the event of a longer absence, having more regular contact with the Headteacher.

5.3 Faculty Link Governors

Each Governor is asked to take a special interest in a particular subject area and if necessary to represent their interests at Governors' meetings. The following are suggestions as to how Governors can involve themselves in a subject area.

- Governors should take the opportunity to meet with the Head of Department Make contact, ask about staffing (who teaches the subject, their experience etc) the allocation of time within the curriculum, GCSE results, accommodation problems, facilities available, facilities and equipment which would be desirable, etc.
- Take a special interest in the subject's results.
- Champion the subject at meetings and in discussions with the Head and Head of Faculty.
- Arrange to visit lessons, accompanied by a member of the Senior Leadership Team, in order to become better informed about teaching and learning in the school.
- Attend the Faculty Review and receive a copy of the Review report. Be familiar with the action plan and monitor its implementation.
- Involve themselves in Learning Walks around the school to monitor how Assessment for Learning is carried out.
- Join the subject staff on a visit (eg fieldwork trip).
- Take a part in the interview process for recruiting staff to the department.

5.4 e-Safety Governor

The role of the e-Safety governor is specified within Policy Document No W04, e-Safety Policy.

5.5 Safeguarding Governor

This Governor will be responsible for liaising with the Headteacher and the designated teacher at the school over matters regarding safeguarding and child protection that are consistent with Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) procedures.

5.6 Performance Management Review

The Chair and Vice-Chair are appointed and trained to carry out the Performance Review of the Headteacher. They carry out this annual review together with the School Improvement Partner (SIP) who would normally act as the clerk and give Governors support in setting key objectives. They may also meet with the Headteacher once a term to monitor their performance towards the agreed objectives.

6 Governors' Training

A wide range of governors training is available from the National Governance Association and Local Authority and governors are encouraged to participate in this training which is paid for by the school.

Code of Conduct for Debenham High School

Governing Body

As governors / trustees, we will focus on our strategic functions:

1. ensuring there is clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
2. holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils and the performance management of staff
3. overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent
4. ensuring the voices of stakeholders are heard

As individuals on the board we agree to:

Fulfil our role & responsibilities

1. We accept that our role is strategic and so will focus on our core functions rather than involve ourselves in day to day management.
2. We will develop, share and live the ethos and values of our school/s.
3. We agree to adhere to school/trust policies and procedures as set out by the relevant governing documents and law.
4. We will work collectively for the benefit of the school/s.
5. We will be candid but constructive and respectful when holding senior leaders to account.
6. We will consider how our decisions may affect the school/s and local community.
7. We will stand by the decisions that we make as a collective.
8. Where decisions and actions conflict with the Seven Principles of Public Life or may place pupils at risk, we will speak up and bring this to the attention of the relevant authorities.
9. We will only speak or act on behalf of the board if we have the authority to do so.
10. We will fulfil our responsibilities as a good employer, acting fairly and without prejudice.
11. When making or responding to complaints we will follow the established procedures.
12. We will strive to uphold the school's / trust's reputation in our private communications (including on social media).

Demonstrate our commitment to the role

1. We will involve ourselves actively in the work of the board, and accept our fair share of responsibilities, serving on committees or working groups where required.
2. We will make every effort to attend all meetings and where we cannot attend explain in advance why we are unable to.
3. We will arrive at meetings prepared, having read all papers in advance, ready to make a positive contribution and observe protocol.
4. We will get to know the school/s well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in school activities.
5. We will visit the school/s and when doing so will make arrangements with relevant staff in advance and observe school and board protocol.
6. When visiting the school in a personal capacity (i.e. as a parent or carer), we will continue to honour the commitments made in this code.

7. We will participate in induction training and take responsibility for developing our individual and collective skills and knowledge on an ongoing basis.

Build and maintain relationships

1. We will develop effective working relationships with school leaders, staff, parents and other relevant stakeholders from our local community/ communities.
2. We will express views openly, courteously and respectfully in all our communications with board members and staff both inside and outside of meetings.
3. We will support the chair in their role of leading the board and ensuring appropriate conduct.

Respect confidentiality

1. We will observe complete confidentiality both inside and outside of school when matters are deemed confidential or where they concern individual staff, pupils or families.
2. We will not reveal the details of any governing board vote.
3. We will ensure all confidential papers are held and disposed of appropriately.
4. We will maintain confidentiality even after we leave office.

Declare conflicts of interest and be transparent

1. We will declare any business, personal or other interest that we have in connection with the board's business and these will be recorded in the Register of Business Interests.
2. We will also declare any conflict of loyalty at the start of any meeting should the need arise.
3. If a conflicted matter arises in a meeting, we will offer to leave the meeting for the duration of the discussion and any subsequent vote.
4. We accept that the Register of Business Interests will be published on the school/trust's website.
5. We will act in the best interests of the school/trust as a whole and not as a representative of any group.
6. We accept that in the interests of open governance, our full names, date of appointment, terms of office, roles on the governing board, attendance records, relevant business and pecuniary interests, category of governor and the body responsible for appointing us will be published on the school's website.
7. We accept that information relating to board members will be collected and recorded on the DfE's national database of governors (Get information about schools), some of which will be publicly available.

We understand that potential or perceived breaches of this code will be taken seriously and that a breach could lead to formal sanctions.

Adopted by Debenham High School Governing Body on 09 December 2020

Signed (Chair of Governors)

The governing body agree that this code of conduct will be reviewed annually, upon significant changes to the law and policy or as needed and it will be endorsed by the full governing board.