



# Brookfield Community School

## Local Academy Board (LAB) Handbook 2023/24

Guidance to support the effective operation of the LAB

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## Introduction

The Redhill Academy Trust came into being in 2011 as a result of governors and staff at the Redhill Academy supporting the Wheldon School in Carlton, Nottingham. The Redhill Academy had recently been designated as 'Outstanding' by Ofsted and was matched with Wheldon who had received an Ofsted 'Inadequate' judgement. This set the ethos of the Trust as a school improvement organisation with the ultimate aim of helping to raise the achievement of local children, whatever their background. Since then, the Trust has only grown as it seeks to support other schools and students.

All academies in the Trust work to the following five principles:

1. High expectations of all students.
2. Valuing and celebrating academic achievement.
3. Outstanding teaching for all students.
4. Widening students' experiences through a range of extra-curricular activities including sports and the performing arts.
5. Commitment to Equality & Diversity.

As a governor in one of the Trust's academies we expect that you will support these principles, whilst challenging, analysing and evaluating the work of the academy you serve.

We hope that this handbook will help you fulfil your role as a governor on one of the Trust's Local Academy Boards. We would also like to thank you for giving up your time to help the Trust improve the achievements, and ultimately, the outcomes of all our students.



**Andrew Burns**  
Trust Principal



**Simon Healy**  
Chair of the Trust Executive Board

## **Responsibilities of the Local Academy Board (LAB)**

As a member of the Local Academy Board, you will share equally with the other members of the board the responsibility of exercising the powers and responsibilities delegated by the Trust Executive Board.

The Local Academy Board has a range of responsibilities:

- Supporting good governance of the school
- Safeguarding and promoting the values of the school
- Supporting the Headteacher of the school and being a critical friend
- Maintaining a detailed understanding of the strengths and areas for development of the school
- Regularly reviewing performance and progress and monitoring data
- Monitoring the achievement, quality of teaching and behaviour and safety
- Supporting effective financial governance
- Engagement with the school's key stakeholders e.g. parents/carers, pupils and staff
- Reviewing the progress of the Academy's Improvement Plan (AIP).

Areas on which the Local Academy Board supports the governance of the school, offering views and feedback include (this is not an exhaustive list):

- Vision, values and school strategy;
- Student achievement;
- Behaviour;
- Attendance;
- The curriculum;
- School premises development and capital bid priorities;
- Safeguarding;
- Parental engagement;
- Communicating ideas from the community to the Trust Executive Board;
- Promoting parent participation.

The Trust and the school leadership team will support the Local Academy Board by providing information, support and guidance.

## **Role of the Local Academy Board Member**

Local Academy Board members offer their experience and expertise to strengthen the decision-making process to support the school's continuous improvement.

Local Academy Boards have some delegated decision-making authority and act as a 'critical friend' for the school. This means:

- They provide support and advice
  - Acting as a sounding board for ideas
  - Providing feedback on proposals
  - Helping where needed
  
- They also provide challenge
  - Asking constructive questions to ensure that decisions are made on the basis of sound information
  - Exploring alternative proposals

An effective Local Academy Board Member supports the school and wants the school to succeed. An effective Local Academy Board Member has a relationship with the school that means they can also be honest where there are concerns. They have a direct link to the Trust Board should concerns need to be raised.

### **Commitment**

Being a member of the board requires commitment. As a Local Academy Board member, there is an expectation that you come to meetings prepared; having read and familiarised yourself with the agenda and any accompanying papers as well as being prepared to ask relevant questions.

There will be opportunities for you to visit the school during the day to help inform the work of the Local Academy Board. Any visit is planned in advance and focused on a consultation area. Your report on the visit will then feed into the consultation response for the school or Trust.

### **Conduct at meetings**

As a Local Academy Board Member, you will be asked to sign a 'Code of Conduct' at the first meeting of the Academic year

During the meeting, it is expected that all members abide by a set of guiding principles:

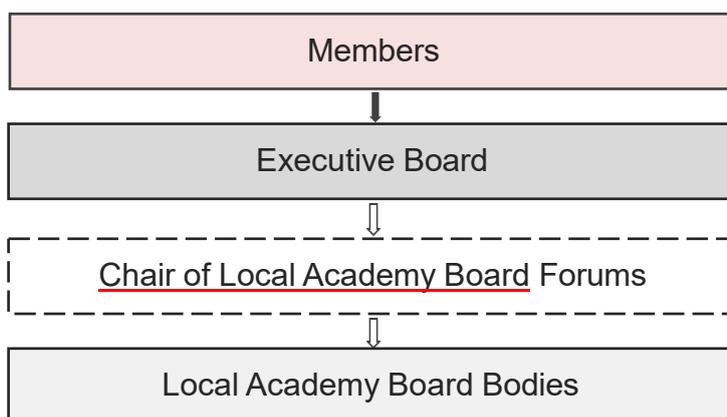
- Support and be guided by the Chair of the meeting.
- Respect other people's opinions and ideas.
- Actively participate in discussions.
- Limit the length of individual contributions.
- Ensure contributions are delivered in a positive and constructive manner, even when challenging or difficult issues are being discussed.
- Respect confidentiality.

## Safeguarding

All Local Academy Board members are required to have an up-to-date DBS (Disclosure and Barring Services) (formerly CRB) check, as well as undertake safeguarding training as required.

## Meeting structure and membership

### Structure:



### Membership<sup>1</sup>:



## Meeting organisation

### Frequency

The Local Academy Board will meet a minimum of four times a year. Meetings dates are usually agreed annually and communicated by the Clerk.

### Clerking

The Local Academy Board is clerked by one of the Academy Clerks.

### Chairing

The Local Academy Board will elect a Chair and Vice Chair at the first meeting of the academic year. Employees of the school are not eligible to stand as Chair or Vice Chair.

The Chair and Vice Chair can resign at any time by giving notice in writing to the LAB Clerk.

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<sup>1</sup> For further information see the Terms of Reference Section 2.

## **Appointment and Removal of Governors**

See Terms of Reference Annex 1

### **Meeting agenda**

The Trust Clerk co-ordinates the agenda with input from the Executive Team, Headteacher and the LAB Chair in advance. It is expected that the Headteacher and Chair will work together in customising their agenda.

The agenda will be circulated by the Clerk seven days in advance of the meeting. Supporting papers should also be circulated, where possible, within this timeframe.

### **Quorum**

To enable an effective meeting to take place there should be at least three members present.

### **Voting**

Where applicable voting will take place by a simple majority through a show of hands, with the meeting chair having the casting vote if the decision is split.

### **Any other business**

This section of the agenda allows for last-minute items to be discussed. 'Last minute' means things that happened after the agenda was circulated that cannot wait for the next meeting. Members should speak to the Chair before the meeting starts to request an item for discussion under any other business. The Chair will determine if the item can be discussed, if members are not able to discuss something knowledgeably, that item should be deferred to the next meeting.

### **Declaration of interests**

Annually you will be asked to complete a declaration of business and pecuniary interest form. Additionally, at the beginning of each meeting you will be asked to declare any business or other interests in any item being discussed at the meeting.

### **Meeting minutes**

The Clerk will produce meeting minutes for approval of the Local Academy Board at their subsequent meeting, which will be held centrally.

Items deemed confidential will be minuted & the item will be highlighted in colour and withheld from public circulation.

## Visiting the school

As a Local Academy Board Member, you may visit the school to fulfil your responsibilities and gain a better understanding of how the school operates on a day-to-day basis. You do not have an automatic right of entry to the school and all visits must be agreed in advance and have a clear focus. A visit may be undertaken to:

- Improve your knowledge of the school and the people that work in it.
- Support the monitoring responsibilities of the LAB.
- Assist the LAB in discussions and making informed decisions.

## Meeting programme

The programme of meetings will include:

| Full Local Academy Board |                         |                                 |        |                   |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------|--------|-------------------|
| DATE                     |                         |                                 | TIME   | CLERK             |
| 1                        | Autumn (Exams Analysis) | 11 <sup>th</sup> September 2023 | 6.00pm | Mrs Cathi Thacker |
| 2                        | Autumn                  | 13 <sup>th</sup> November 2023  | 6.00pm |                   |
| 3                        | Spring                  | 4 <sup>th</sup> March 2024      | 6.00pm |                   |
| 4                        | Summer                  | 17 <sup>th</sup> June 2024      | 6.00pm |                   |

## Meeting Scheduling and Agenda

Each LAB meeting agenda should consider the latest student data dashboard, Headteacher's report, the RAG rated Academy Improvement Plan and Risk Analysis. It is strongly suggested that each meeting of the LAB starts with a presentation from a senior member of staff from the academy on a current issue of interest to the governors. This should be followed by questions, discussions, and scrutiny from the board.

LABs (Local Academy Boards) should also discuss the following agenda items at the LAB meetings.

- HR/Staffing Issues
- Capital Projects (if relevant)
- GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation)
- Expenditure and ensuring delivery of Academy annual budgets Other items relevant to the individual academy.

### Autumn 1

- Review of examination results from the previous summer.
- Update on any premises developments.
- The Local Advisory Board of the academy will ensure that each teacher's salary is reviewed annually, with effect from 1 September and no later than 31 October each year.
- The Local Advisory Board of the academy will ensure that each leader (those paid on the leadership spine) salary is reviewed every year with effect from 1 September and no later than 31 October.
- Curriculum model for the following academic year.
- Any performance management issues.

### Spring

- Findings of latest review of teaching and learning.
- Staffing for the following academic year.
- Accounts Audit Issues Identified (January meeting only)

### Summer

- Proposed site improvements.
- Priorities for next year's Academy Improvement Plan.
- Year-End Forecast Determination (May meeting only)

## Sequence of LAB meetings with Trust meetings

Each termly sequence will be as follows:



|                                   |                  |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|
| <b>Local Academy Board Member</b> | Insert name here |
| <b>ACADEMIC YEAR</b>              | 2023/24          |

The RHAT code of conduct is anchored in the Seven Nolan Principles of Public Life. The code is also aligned with the [Framework for Ethical Leadership in Education](#) which outlines principles that support ethical decision-making and challenge unethical behaviour.

We will abide by the Principles of Public Life:

***Selflessness***

We will act solely in terms of the public interest.

***Integrity***

We will avoid placing ourselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence us in our work. We will not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for ourselves, our family, or our friends. We will declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

***Objectivity***

We will act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

***Accountability***

We are accountable to the public for our decisions and actions and will submit ourselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

***Openness***

We will act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information will not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

***Honesty***

We will be truthful.

***Leadership***

We will exhibit these principles in our own behaviour. We will actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

We will apply the highest standards and will:

1. act within our powers
2. promote the success of the trust
3. exercise independent judgement
4. exercise reasonable care, skill and diligence
5. avoid conflicts of interest
6. not accept benefits from third parties
7. declare interest in proposed transactions or arrangements

Those governing at a local level will focus on the Trust core governance functions:

- ensuring there is 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
- ensuring the voices of stakeholders are heard

As individuals, agree to:

### *Fulfil our role & responsibilities*

- We accept that our role is strategic and so will focus on our core functions rather than involve ourselves in day-to-day management.
- We will fulfil our role and responsibilities as set out in our scheme of delegation.
- We will develop, share and live the ethos and values of our trust.
- We agree to adhere to trust policies and procedures.
- We will work collectively for the benefit of the trust.
- We will be candid but constructive and respectful when holding senior leaders to account.
- We will consider how our decisions may affect the trust and local community.
- We will stand by the decisions that we make as a collective.
- 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.
- We will only speak or act on behalf of the trust board if we have the authority to do so.
- **\*Those governing at local level** Will fulfil our responsibilities as a good employer, acting fairly and without prejudice.
- When making or responding to complaints, we will follow the established procedures.
- We will strive to uphold the trust's reputation in our private communications (including on social media).
- **\*We will have regard to our responsibilities under The Equality Act and will work to advance equality of opportunity for all.**
- **\*Those governing at local level:** We will act as the local ambassadors for our trust.

### *Demonstrate our commitment to the role*

- 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.
- We will make every effort to attend all meetings and where we cannot attend explain in advance why we are unable to.
- We will arrive at meetings prepared, having read all papers in advance, ready to make a positive contribution and observe protocol.
- We will get to know the school/s well and welcome opportunities to be involved in school activities.
- We will visit the school/s and when doing so will make arrangements with relevant staff in advance and observe school and board protocol.
- When visiting a school in a personal capacity (for example, as a parent or carer), we will continue to honour the commitments made in this code.
- 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*

- We will develop effective working relationships with leaders, staff, parents and other relevant stakeholders from our local communities.
- **\*Those governing at local level:** We will champion the voices of our school community and stakeholders.
- **\*Those governing at local level:** We will establish effective working relationships with trustees.
- We will express views openly, courteously and respectfully in all our communications with board members and staff both inside and outside of meetings.
- We will work to create an inclusive environment where each board member's contributions are valued equally.

## Code of Conduct: 2023-2024

- We will support the chair in their role of leading the Local Academy Board and ensuring appropriate conduct.

### *Respect confidentiality*

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

### *Declare conflicts of interest and be transparent*

- 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.
- We will also declare any conflict of loyalty at the start of any meeting should the need arise.
- 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.
- We accept that the Register of Business Interests will be published on the trust's website.
- \*We will act as an academy committee member; not as a representative of any group.
- We accept that in the interests of open governance, our full names, date of appointment, terms of office, roles on the trust board, attendance records, relevant business and pecuniary interests, category of governor/trustee and the body responsible for appointing us will be published on the Trust website.

We accept that information relating to Local Academy board members will be collected and recorded on the DfE's national database (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.

**SIGNATURE** \_\_\_\_\_

**DATE** \_\_\_\_\_

2023

*\*New statements updated in 2023 v1*