



Terms of Reference: Full Governing Body (October 2023)

Role of the Central Governing Board

The Full Governing Body (FGB) is the proprietary body for the Synergy Schools Federation, and is the legally liable body accountable for delivery across all schools within the Federation. The FGB plays a vital role in setting the strategic direction of the Federation, overseeing educational outcomes and holding senior leaders accountable for financial probity and effective use of funds. Those serving on the Full Governing Body must ensure that at all times they act in good faith and in the best interests of the Federation and schools, exercising reasonable care and skill having particular regard to personal knowledge and experience.

There is an expectation that all Governors will have a degree of visibility in school throughout the academic year. For example, this may be via monitoring visits and visits to classrooms during the day or supporting activities and events on an evening.

Membership and Terms of Office

The FGB will consist of 14 members. Its membership is outlined in the Instrument of Government. The FGB will appoint a Chair and 4 Vice-Chairs on a two-year cycle. Vice-chairs have specific roles and responsibilities, as follows:

- Chair of the Local School Committee for Brompton-on-Swale CE Primary School
- Chair of the Local School Committee for Crakehall CE Primary School
- Chair of the Local School Committee for Leeming and Londonderry Community and Pickhill CE Primary School
- Co-ordinator of governor monitoring, challenge and support, setting the agendas for each Local School Committee

Governors will usually serve a four-year term to ensure a full understanding and continuity in challenge and support. The Full Governing Body will undertake a self-evaluation on an annual basis, including a review of membership and skills, to confirm any changes or additions required. Recommendations for all appointments to the FGB will be based on this skills analyses. Governors will only be granted sabbaticals in highly exceptional circumstances and for no longer than six months. Instead, if they are finding the time commitment too great, governors are encouraged to discuss this with the Chair of the Full Governing Body. The Full Governing Body can invite advisers (including members of staff in the schools) to attend meetings provided they do not take part in decision-making.



Chair of the Full Governing Body

The Chair will:

- Provide a clear lead and direction for the Board, understanding the aims and vision of the Federation and the roles played by all those involved.
- Build an effective team, helping ensure the Board has the necessary skills and experience, that it promotes equality and diversity and that members can make a positive contribution to driving schools' improvement with support and development provided to do this.
- Work closely with the Executive Headteacher and Heads of Schools to ensure there is proper challenge and support.
- Hold the Board to account, ensuring all business is conducted efficiently and effectively, ensuring members attend regularly, have the opportunity to contribute and are listened to, with clear decisions being made when necessary.
- With one other governor, approve governors', associate members' and LSC members' expenses in line with the Governor Expenses Policy.

Meetings

The Full Governing Body usually meets seven times each year. The annual schedule of meetings will be confirmed as part of its date-setting for each school year and communicated by the Clerk to the Governors. The quorum for meetings shall be 50% of the Board's membership (excluding any vacancies among governors). FGB members can participate by phone or video conference. Absences, including lateness, should be notified to the Clerk to the Governors in advance. Attendance is expected at all meetings and is monitored. Attendance is reported to the Governors on an annual basis and published on the Federation's website. If Governors have low attendance, they will be asked to assess their commitment to the position and consider standing down.

Where a decision is required, governors will be asked to indicate their approval. Should any vote be tied, the governor chairing the meeting will have a second or casting vote.

Responsibilities

Strategic vision and oversight

- To determine and champion the vision, mission, values, ethos and educational character for the Federation to ensure spiritual, academic, physical and emotional wellbeing of pupils in line with requirements and good practice
- To be responsible for all activity, educational performance and inspections (including Ofsted and SIAMS) in line with requirements and good practice
- To approve Federation and the Swaledale Alliance's objectives, KPIs, evaluation and development plans
- Management of federation-wide risks

Governance

- To approve the governance Scheme of Delegation and Terms of Reference
- To appoint and remove key governance roles (Full Governing Board Chair and Vice-Chairs and Local School Committee Chairs and members)
- To agree link roles and working groups
- To oversee governor induction and training
- To oversee annual governance self-evaluation priorities and setting meeting dates
- To approve and ensure publication of annual governance statement
- To ensure compliance with all statutory policy requirements
- To approve schools' proposed amendments of admissions criteria and consultation plan
- To determine the approach to complaints including the Complaints Policy (including statutory sections relating to early years provision) and complaints at Stage 3
- To ensure compliance with all requirements including contracts and procurement, Disability Discrimination Act and Free School Meals
- To confirm term dates
- To ensure all requirements with Public Sector Equality Duty and approve the Equality Policy and Objectives
- To form Governor panels as requested, for example, relating to grievance and disciplinary matters as well as pupil exclusions.
- To approve any statutory early years policies not referred to elsewhere in the delegation scheme

Finance, administration and contracts

- To oversee and approve finances in line with requirements and good practice
- To approve the first formal budget and year-end for each financial year for individual schools and the Federation
- To receive reports from the Business Manager to monitor budget and any variances regarding income, expenditure and cash flow
- To take decisions as required regarding reports on school voluntary funds, audit reports and information from Local School Committees
- To ensure financial controls are in place
- To undertake an annual review of the Federation Register of Business Interests
- Approve Federation Recharge Policy

Curriculum and Standards, SEND and Pupil Wellbeing

- To determine the Federation-wide Curriculum Policy
- To review data and reports on progress and KPIs
- To approve Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) Policies
- To approve policies relating to relationships and sex education
- To receive reports on pupil exclusions
- To determine the Federation's Safeguarding Policy (including statutory sections relating to early years provision)

- To be responsible for safeguarding across the whole federation
- To approve each school's Behaviour Policy

Staffing

- To appoint, suspend and dismiss the Executive Headteacher and Heads of Schools
- To approve Federation staffing policies
- To receive reports on performance management of the Executive Headteacher and make decisions/ receive reports on other staffing issues in line with policies and delegations.

Terms of Reference: Local School Committee

Role of the Local School Committee

The Synergy Schools Federation has established 3 Local School Committees (LSCs) across the federation to support governance. The role of Local School Committee members is an important one, ensuring there is local accountability for the performance of individual schools and that schools achieve strong outcomes for their pupils and the communities they serve.

Membership and Terms of Office

The Local School Committees must include at least 2 governors and will consist of between 4 and 7 members as follows:

- **Head of School**
- **Foundation Governor**

The foundation governor who is associated to a school's LSC by their ex-officio role (or who has been appointed to act in the place of the Incumbent) will be automatically a member of the LSC.

- **A Member of Staff (Associate Staff Governor)**

The staff governor will automatically become a member of the LSC at the school where they work.

For the other LSCs, a member of staff will be elected to serve on the LSC, using the same process used to elect a staff governor.

- **1 Parent Governor or Associate Parent Governor**

At least one parent must be a member of the LSC. In some cases, this could be a parent governor.

- **3 Co-opted Governors or Associate Co-opted Governors**

Although co-opted governors are welcome to become a part of a Local School Committee, it is helpful to support succession planning and ensure a good background in education knowledge by co-opting associate co-opted governors who are only members of a Local School Committee.

The Head of School will be a member of their LSC. Each LSC will have at least 2 members of the full governing body on it and it is through them working with the LSC that the FGB delegates decision-making responsibility. The chair of the LSC will be a governor on the FGB.

Recommendations for appointments to the Local School Committee will be proposed to the Full Governing Board (FGB) by the Chair of the LSC. Appointments will be ratified by the FGB before associate governors attend meetings.

The Local School Committee Chair and Vice-Chair will be appointed by the Full Governing Body on an annual basis.

Local School Committee members will usually serve for a minimum period of four years to ensure continuity in challenge and support. The Local School Committee can invite advisers (including members of staff in the schools and the Synergy Federation team) to attend meetings provided they do not take part in decision-making.

The Chair of the Local School Committee

The Chair will:

- Provide a clear lead and direction for the LSC, understanding the aims and vision of the school and wider Federation and the roles played by all those involved
- Build an effective team, helping ensure the LSC has the necessary skills and experience, that it promotes equality and diversity and that members can make a positive contribution to driving schools' improvement with support and development provided to do this
- Work closely with the Executive Headteacher and Head of School to ensure there is proper challenge and support
- Hold the LSC to account, ensuring all business is conducted efficiently and effectively, ensuring members attend regularly, have the opportunity to contribute and are listened to with clear decisions being made when necessary.

Meetings

The Local School Committee within the Synergy School Federation would be scheduled to meet three times each year. The annual schedule of meetings will be confirmed as part of its date-setting at the start of each school year.

A written report will be sent after each LSC meeting to the governing body. If required, the LSC Chair will give a verbal report at the governing body meeting to summarise the main points and actions discussed.

The quorum for meetings will be made up of at least 1 governor, the Head of School (or acting Head of School in event of the Head of School being unavailable) and totalling no less than 4 members. LSC members can participate by phone or video conference. A meeting will not become inquorate should the head of school have to leave due to declaring an interest. Absences, including lateness, should be notified to the Chair of the LSC or Head of School in advance. Attendance is expected at all meetings and is monitored. Attendance is reported to the Governors on an annual basis. If governors, including associate governors, have low attendance, they will be asked to assess their commitment to the position and consider standing down.

Responsibilities

Strategic vision and oversight

- To recommend required school-specific changes to Federation vision, mission, values, ethos and educational character to ensure spiritual wellbeing of pupils



- To determine the LSC's own vision in line with the Federation vision and reports to FGB
- To review and recommend school evaluation (SEF) and development plans in line with Federation priorities (FIP)
- To receive and consider school reports from external partners in line with Federation priorities
- To contribute to planning prior to, and action planning after, inspections including Ofsted and SIAMS

Governance

- To provide oversight and monitoring (where required) for pre-school registration
- To receive regular updates on governance and ensure all LSC members attend appropriate training
- To monitor school specific policy requirements
- To monitor the implementation of Federation policies at school level
- To ensure school compliance with statutory requirements
- To set and monitor school Equality Objectives in line with Equality Act
- To monitor the Equality Policy at school level

Curriculum and Standards

- To oversee the implementation of the Federation-wide Curriculum Policy
- To monitor the quality of education at the school
- To approve the curriculum proposed by each Head of School (consistent with Federation policy)
- To oversee the target-setting process with the Head of School and monitor progress

Safeguarding, SEND and Pupil Wellbeing

- To ensure implementation of the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) Policies
- To review and suggest amendments for policies relating to pupil behaviour
- To ensure implementation of the Safeguarding Policy
- To ensure adequate Safeguarding provisions in line with requirements
- To report Safeguarding matters and procedures as required
- To nominate a designated Member who act as link person between the Federated Governing Body, LSC and the nominated Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Premises

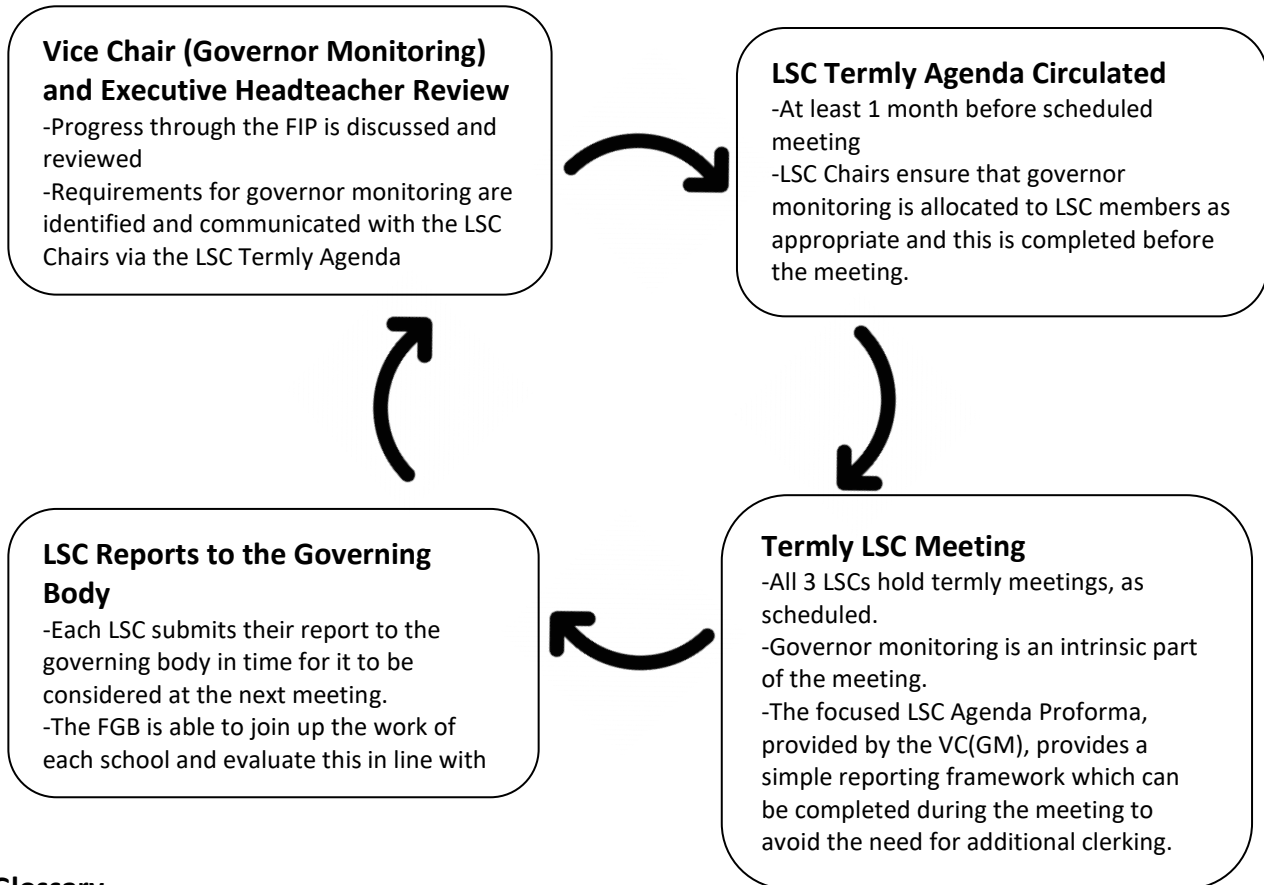
- To agree the school Health & Safety Policy
- To monitor implementation of the Health & Safety Policy including for premises work, site inspections, and receive reports e.g. on fire risk assessments
- To agree and monitor the school accessibility plan
- To review and maintain the buildings strategy and asset management plan
- To approve school's insurance arrangements
- To review risk reports

Information management and communication

- To ensure effective implementation of General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), Data Protection Act 2018 and Data Protection policies and procedures at school level
- To ensure school websites are compliant with statutory requirements
- To establish and maintain community relationships and provide channels to respond to feedback

Governor Monitoring

The process of governor monitoring is cyclical and can be best explained diagrammatically as follows:



Glossary

FIP – Federation Improvement Plan

FGB – Full Governing Body

VC(GM) – Vice Chair (Governor Monitoring)

LSC – Local School Committee

Appendix 1: LSC Agenda Pro-Forma Example

Appendix 2: Governor Monitoring Pro-Forma Example

