



LONDON DIOCESAN BOARD FOR SCHOOLS

Short Guide for New Chairs of Governors in LDBS Schools

Welcome

Congratulations on becoming a Chair of Governors! We thank you for taking on this key role to support our schools.

This short guide is designed to give you an introductory overview of the LDBS and aspects of governance specific to Church of England schools.

For more information on governance, your role as Chair and the LDBS, we recommend the following websites/organisations:

- Department for Education, Governance Handbook and Competency Framework: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/governance-handbook>
- LDBS: <https://www.ldbs.co.uk/>
- National Governance Association (NGA): <https://www.nga.org.uk/Home.aspx>

The London Diocesan Board for Schools

Church of England schools in our diocese automatically come under the LDBS umbrella. Our LDBS vision is to serve and support schools. Read more about our history and purpose [here](#).

Your school link adviser is your key LDBS contact and will usually be your first point of contact. She or he will be able to direct you to other members of the team as necessary, including the Head of Governance Services. Our staff contact details are available [here](#).

Schools pay a Core Service subscription to enable the LDBS to do its work. Full details of our services available to your school are [here](#).

The LDBS is governed by a board made up of representatives from each deanery in the London Diocese. Our board oversees the work of all LDBS advisers and officers. Our board structure is defined in a legal document called the Diocesan Measure, which applies to dioceses across the country; this measure is due to be updated in 2021 or 2022.

LDBS statutory rights and obligations

LDBS must advise on and agree any new instrument of government for a Church of England school in the London Diocese; for example, the instrument of government must be amended if a governing body wants to make changes to its make-up.

LDBS must also give approval to school organisation changes, such as federation, amalgamation or academy conversion. The [Memorandum of Understanding](#) between the Department for Education (DfE) and the National Society (Church of England Education Office) contains more information.

A panel of our board approves the appointment and reappointment of all LDBS foundation governors in our schools. If your governing body has LDBS foundation governor vacancies, please contact our Governor Appointments Administrator (governor.appointments@london.anglican.org).

LDBS support for you and your governing body

- *LDBS governor training*

Access to a comprehensive programme of training sessions is included in our Core Service subscription. The 2020-21 schedule for governor training is on our website [here](#).

- *Grow Education Partners*

A trading subsidiary of LDBS, Grow provides a wide range of further services to schools at competitive additional costs. Full details are on the [Grow website](#) and your link adviser can help you and your headteacher decide what to buy.

- *Human Resources support*

Basic telephone and email advice is provided by our HR team as part of our Core Service, including managing parental complaints, exclusions and panel hearings. Many schools chose to buy full HR support through Grow; others work with their local authority or an external provider.

- *Up to date governance advice and resources*

In addition to the support provided by your link adviser, our Head of Governance Services and our Admissions Adviser are available to provide telephone and email advice.

On the LDBS website you can find all our latest information and [resources](#) to support schools. Make sure you are subscribed to our [bulletin mailing list](#) to stay up to date.

Head teacher/Chair working relationship

This is one of the most important relationships in ensuring the success of your school. It is crucial to establish from the start patterns of communication and meeting which work for you both and which recognise the strategic role of the chair (and other governors) compared to the day-to-day operational role of the headteacher.

The governing body must ensure that suitable arrangements are made for the head teacher's performance management, including the use of an external adviser for an annual appraisal. Your link adviser can organise this with you.

The Governing Body as Employer

In a voluntary aided school, the governing body is the employer of all school staff. In a Church of England academy, staff are employed by the academy trust. We strongly recommend that our schools and academies adopt LDBS policies and contracts which are specifically written for Church of England schools and academies. Our HR advisers can provide these to you through the Core Service.

Appointing a Head teacher

Appointing a new head teacher is one of the most important tasks for a governing body, led by the Chair. Your LDBS link adviser can support this process, and it is usual for us to have full advisory rights. Detailed information is available in the [LDBS Guidance on Appointing Headteachers](#).

The Role of the Clerk

Effective governance requires professional clerking, and your clerk should be your governing body's governance professional. A skilled clerk will make your role as Chair much more straightforward, as she or he will be your go-to source of statutory and administrative advice. Some schools have a service level agreement with the LDBS for professional clerking services (contact the Head of the LDBS Clerking Service for more details); others use a local authority clerking service or employ an independent clerk.

SIAMS (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools)

In addition to inspections by OFSTED, all schools designated with a religious character are subject to inspections organised by the relevant faith body. SIAMS inspections of Church of England Schools occur every five years. The 2018 SIAMS schedule asks the overarching question "How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?" It is based around the key strands of the Church of England Vision for Education. You can read more about this on the [SIAMS pages of our website](#).

Buildings

The governing body of a voluntary aided school is responsible for meeting 10% of the cost of any capital work. Through subscription to the LDBS Maintenance Scheme, your governing body can ensure that these costs are met when works take place. The Scheme operates as a collective self-insurance scheme under which the burden of management, administration and financing of all repairs, maintenance and minor improvements is removed from individual schools and is handled by LDBS staff, with building consultants attached to each school. Information about the scheme is available [here](#).

Insurance

The governing body must ensure that the school is adequately insured. This can be done through LDBS insurance or a local authority or an independent company. Please talk to your link adviser if you have any insurance queries.

Admissions

In Church of England schools which are their own admissions authorities (i.e. academies and voluntary aided schools), the governing body is responsible for the school's admissions policy. The policy must be reviewed annually. Governing boards must have regard to LDBS guidance on admissions and have a statutory duty to consult LDBS first on any changes.

The LDBS guidance to schools is that they should seek to be a distinctive and inclusive Christian community and that this principle should be reflected in their Admissions policies. This means that, even when a school is heavily oversubscribed, schools should not exclusively offer places to children from practising Christian families. Our Admissions guidance is [here](#). Our Admissions Adviser is available to assist by phone or email.

Statutory framework and Department for Education guidance for governors

As Chair, you need to stay up to date with the statutory framework applicable to the leadership of schools. All governing bodies function within the framework of the School Governance Regulations:

- School Governance (Roles, Procedures and Allowances) (England) Regulations 2013

- School Governance (Constitution) (England) Regulations 2012
- School Governance (Federations) (England) Regulations 2012 – if your school is part of a federation
- School Governance (Collaboration) (England) Regulations 2003 – if your school otherwise collaborates with another school
- School Staffing (England) Regulations 2009 – in respect of the governing body’s obligations as an employer

In addition to the Governance Handbook referred to above, the Department for Education maintains collections of the applicable regulatory documents and other governance guidance:

- For voluntary aided/maintained schools: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/local-authority-maintained-schools-governance>
- For academies: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/academy-trusts-governance>

We will keep you informed of any changes to regulations or Departmental guidance via our bulletin.

LDBS, September 2020