



Governance Handbook

2024 - 25



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1. Welcome from the Chair

As Chair to the Board, it gives me great pleasure to further promote our reviewed Governance Handbook for the coming academic year. I am grateful also for the opportunity to once again express my personal thanks for the excellent work that you do as Governors and Directors to Melrose Learning Trust. Your time, energy, interest and commitment given freely in support of our schools is greatly appreciated.

As a Trust, we have come a long way in a very short period of time, moving from one school to nine schools over the last 4-year period. With a growing reputation as a Trust that can make a real difference, significant opportunities are presented for this growth to continue over the coming academic year and beyond with the anticipation of more schools joining our family.

The successes and achievements that the Trust and its schools have secured to date have been underpinned not least with robust and effective governance which will be key to our ongoing success and the future of our children that we provide for.

I recognise that the foundation of effective governance is based on commitment, skills, knowledge and behaviours of you as a group of volunteers. It also needs to consist of a diverse group of volunteers from a variety of backgrounds, each bringing with them different perspectives and experiences, but who are there for the same reason ... to ensure the very best for our children. Many of you involved in school governance do so because you want to give something back to the community. Being a governor is also about learning new skills and acquiring wider knowledge with a positive impact to your own personal development.

The aim of school governance is to provide confident and strong leadership, resulting in robust accountability, oversight and assurance for educational and financial performance. There are so many aspects of this within an academy trust arrangement that we thought it would be helpful to bring together the various aspects of our arrangements into a Governance Handbook, providing an overview of the Trust's governance arrangements and the roles that you as Governors and Directors have in making these efficient and effective. I hope that this Handbook goes some way in helping your understanding of our governance arrangements, your role within that, and recommend its reading.

The Trust remains at a very exciting time in its development, and I welcome your ongoing support and contributions to this



Paul Mackings
Chair to the Board – Melrose Learning Trust

2. Governance Overview

2.1 Melrose Learning Trust – Vision

As a Trust, our aim is for all of our schools to maintain their own unique identity whilst working together to ensure the educational potential of each child is developed and grown, and their wellbeing is fundamental to everything we do.

Melrose Learning Trust is committed to providing children with high achievement, confidence and enrichment, developed through excellent teaching, stimulating curriculums, and strong moral values.

Our aspirations as a Trust are:

- to ensure the physical and spiritual well-being of every member of the school community is maintained and with our strong Christian values and ethos at the heart of all we seek to do
- to create learning environments where children develop a love for learning and learn how to use knowledge wisely
- to share expertise across a range of settings to enhance professional development of staff
- to ensure our schools are at the forefront of modern technology and to make the best use of the resources available to us.
- to be central to the life of their communities

2.2 Context

Melrose Learning Trust is a Multi-Academy Trust which is currently made up of nine primary schools:

- Abbey Infant & Junior Schools (serving the communities of Darlington)
- Easington CE Primary School (serving the communities of Easington village, County Durham)
- Esh CE Primary School (serving the communities of Esh Village, County Durham)
- Greatham CE Primary School (serving the communities of Greatham and surrounding villages, Hartlepool)
- High Coniscliffe CE Primary School (serving the communities of High Coniscliffe village, Darlington and North Yorkshire)
- Priors Mill CE Primary School (serving the communities of Billingham, Stockton on Tees)
- St Mary's Cockerton CE Primary School (serving the communities of Cockerton village and Darlington)
- Wynyard CE Primary (serving the communities of Wynyard and Hartlepool)

The Federation of Abbey Infant and Junior Schools (Darlington) joined Melrose Learning Trust as of 1st February 2024, the first non-church schools to join the Trust's arrangements, signaling its growth as a Trust that supports schools with or without a designated religious character.

The Trust was established in December 2020 with Wynyard CE Primary being the founding school. The Trust takes its name from St Cuthbert and his association with Melrose Abbey, maintaining the Trust's strong link with The Northern Saints and the North East's spiritual history.

Each school in the Trust is a school in its own right, with its own identity and heritage, but all the schools have very similar values and share the belief that excellence in education is based upon a number of key principles:

- Ensuring all children are given the opportunities to maximise their potential.

- Our aim is to provide a curriculum that is flexible, engaging and enjoyable for all. Our belief is that learning is enhanced when teachers are invested/passionate in what they are teaching, and progress is more likely to be accelerated when children enjoy the curriculum. We are committed to ensuring both indoor and outdoor learning are strong across the Trust.
- Staff feel valued, enjoy their working environment and are provided with bespoke professional development that is fundamental to continuing school development.
- Leadership is strong at all levels.
- Strong partnerships are the key to success. The Trust offers a comprehensive support and development package to all schools.

The Trust is a company limited by guarantee (Company Number 09012630) and an exempt charity. It is an independent legal entity with whom the Secretary of State has entered into a Funding Agreement on the basis of agreeing the Trust's Articles of Association with the Department for Education (DfE).

The charitable company's Memorandum and Articles of Association (approved by the Diocese of Durham and the DfE) are the primary governance documents of the Trust. The Trustees of Melrose Learning Trust are also the Directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law. The charitable company operates as Melrose Learning Trust. Because Directors are bound by both charity and company law, the terms 'Trustees' and 'Directors' are often used interchangeably. Melrose Learning Trust uses the term 'Director' rather than the term 'Trustee'.

The Trust's "Objects" – the purpose for which the Trust was established - are identified in the Articles of Association and are as follows:

"to advance for the public benefit education in the United Kingdom, in particular but without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing, by establishing, maintaining, carrying on, managing and developing academies which shall offer a broad and balanced curriculum and which:

- shall include Church of England Academies ("Church Academies" and each a "Church Academy") designated as such which shall be conducted in accordance with the principles, practices and tenets of the Church of England both generally and in particular in relation to arranging for religious education and daily acts of worship, and
- includes other academies whether with or without a designated religious character.

but in relation to each of the academies to recognise and support their individual ethos, whether or not designated Church of England.

Where a school is designated as (or recognised as) a Church School, in relation to the ethos and religious education provided at the school, the Directors shall have regard to any advice and follow any directives issued by the Diocesan Corporate Member.

2.3 Overview of Governance Documentation

Recommended governance documents to refer to in supporting the discharge of the governance role:

- DfE Governance Handbook
- DfE Competency Framework for Governance
- Academy Trust Handbook
- Melrose Learning Trust Articles of Association
- Melrose Learning Trust Scheme of Delegation
- Melrose Learning Trust Governance Handbook
- Melrose Learning Trust Director Induction Policy
- Melrose Learning Trust Governor Induction Policy

Further professional support is available from organisations such as the National Governors Association and the School Bus.

3. The Structure of the Learning Trust’s Governance

The constitutional framework of the Trust is determined by the Trust’s Articles of Association. These detail the responsibilities of the Trust’s Members and Directors. The Articles of Association allow the Board of Directors to determine the governance structure of the Trust.

Melrose Learning Trust has developed a governance framework that helps to ensure that the Trust fulfils its overall purpose, achieves its intended outcomes for learners, and operates in an effective, efficient, and ethical manner.

3.1 Melrose Learning Trust Strategic Governance Framework



St Hild’s College CE Primary School (Durham) – anticipated conversion as from 1st April 2025
St Joseph’s CE Primary School (North Wynyard) – expected opening September 2026

4. Melrose Learning Trust - Members

4.1 The Role of the Members

Members have a limited and distinct role to Trustees / Directors which should avoid duplicating the role of the Trust Board or assuming the role of Trustees / Directors.

The Members are “guardians of the governance of the Trust” and as such have a different status to the Directors. They are the subscribers to the Articles of Association, the latter being the legal document which outlines the governance structure and how the Trust will operate.

There must be at least three signatories to the Articles of Association. The Department for Education (DfE) recommends that Trusts should ideally have at least five members, though they may choose to have more or less than five.

The Members appoint Directors to the Board to ensure that the Trust’s charitable objects are carried out and so are able to remove Directors if they fail to fulfil this responsibility. The Members may by ordinary resolution, appoint up to 11 Directors.

The Members oversee the achievement of the Trust’s objects, acting as the ‘conscience’ and ‘moral guardian’ of the Trust’s purpose, values and ethos. Members also oversee the performance of the Board. The Trust is required to hold an Annual General Meeting at which the Board submits an Annual Report (inc. Financial Statements), setting out the performance of the Trust to the Members. This enables Members to hold the Board of Directors to account for the educational and financial performance of the Trust over the preceding financial year. Members may also convene General Meetings at any point in the year. Directors are invited to attend any Member meetings, but they have no voting rights where decisions are required from these meetings.

In summary, the core responsibilities of Members are to:

- Sign the Articles of Association
- Determine the name of the Trust
- Appoint Members and Directors
- Appoint and remove the auditors
- Receive a copy of the Annual Report and Accounts
- Ensure the success of the Trust. As the ‘guardians of the governance’ of the Trust, Members have responsibility for ensuring that the Academy Trust’s charitable objective - which for most Trusts can be summarised as ‘advancing education for the public benefit’ - is being met.

The Members should therefore focus on outcomes - are the pupils in the Trust making expected progress and reaching the required levels of attainment and is the Board of Directors taking all actions to maximise the Trust’s rate of progress towards these goals? Members should focus on financial oversight - is the Trust spending public money wisely?

To assure Members that the Board is exercising effective governance, the Board has put in place a number of strategies to enable Members to form a view about the effectiveness of the Trust’s governance arrangements:

- Members receive the Trustees’ Annual Report as part of the Trust’s annual accounting arrangements. Members can hold Directors to account for the performance identified in the Annual Report at the Annual General Meeting of the Company;
- Members receive the approved minutes from each Board meeting;

- Members are provided with the Directors' annual self-evaluation of the effectiveness of their governance arrangements so that Members are aware of the strengths and areas of development that have been identified by Directors;
- Members have their own dedicated folder on the Melrose Learning Trust portal where information is uploaded that is felt to be informative for Members.

5. Melrose Learning Trust – Directors

5.1 Directors

Directors are both charity trustees and company directors of the Trust. They ensure compliance with the Trust's charitable objects and with company and charity law, and with the Trust's Funding

Agreement. Because Directors are bound by both charity and company law, the terms 'Trustees' and 'Directors' are often used interchangeably. Melrose Learning Trust uses the term 'Director' rather than the term 'Trustee'.

Directors must comply with the following duties under charity law:

- ensure the charity is carrying out its purposes for the public benefit;
- comply with the charity's governing document and the law;
- act in the charity's best interests;
- manage the charity's resources responsibly;
- act with reasonable care and skill;
- ensure the charity is accountable.

Directors must also comply with their statutory duties as Company Directors:

- act within their powers;
- promote the success of the company;
- exercise independent judgment;
- exercise reasonable care, skill and diligence;
- avoid conflicts of interest;
- not to accept benefits from third parties; and
- declare any interest in proposed transactions or arrangements.

Directors are appointed under the rules identified within the Trust's Articles of Association and membership of the Board of Directors is in accordance with the details contained within it.

Directors may exercise all the powers of the Trust.

The Articles of Association identify that there shall be up to 11 Directors appointed to the Melrose Learning Trust Board with appointments made in line with the guidance in the Articles of Association.

The term of office for each Director is four years with the exception of a Co-opted Director. The period of office for a Co-opted Director is determined by the Board of Directors but will not be more than four years. Directors may co-opt an employee of the Trust as a Co-opted Director as long as the number of Directors who are employees of the Trust does not exceed one third of the total number of Directors.

5.2 Board of Directors

The Board is a corporate entity and is the accountable body for the Melrose Learning Trust. As the accountable body, the Board is the key decision maker. It delegates some operational matters to executive leaders and governance functions to Committees, but the Board remains accountable and responsible for all decisions made. Executive leaders operate within the autonomy, powers and functions delegated to them by the Board.

The Board's role is a strategic one compared to that of the Trust's CEO and senior leaders who are responsible for the operational work undertaken by the academies in the Trust. The Board avoids routine involvement in operational matters. In effect, the Board of Directors commissions work to be undertaken by the CEO and senior leaders.

Decisions made by the Board are made in the best interests of all pupils in the Trust and in line with the Trust's charitable objects.

The Board has defined the Trust's purpose and established a strategy to deliver this. The strategy is underpinned by the values and behaviours that shape the Board's culture and the way it conducts its business.

5.3 Role of the Board of Directors

The Board of Directors has three core functions:

- (i) Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction; by:
 - Setting the vision, values, and objectives for the Learning Trust
 - Agreeing the school improvement strategy with priorities and targets
 - Meeting statutory duties

- (ii) Holding the CEO and the Headteachers of the schools in the Learning Trust to account for the educational performance of the school and all their pupils, safeguarding, and the performance management of all staff; ensuring accountability, by:
 - Appointing the CEO, Headteachers
 - Monitoring progress towards targets
 - Performance managing the CEO and Headteachers
 - Engaging with stakeholders
 - Contributing to school self-evaluation

- (iii) Overseeing the financial performance of the Learning Trust and making sure its money is well spent. Ensuring financial probity, by:
 - Setting the budget
 - Monitoring spending against the budget
 - Ensuring value for money is obtained
 - Ensuring risks to the organisation are managed

The Board strives to ensure that its core work reflects the following characteristics:

- strategic leadership that sets and champions vision, ethos and strategy;
- accountability that drives up educational standards and financial performance;
- people with the right skills, experience, qualities and capacity;
- structures that reinforce clearly defined roles and responsibilities;
- compliance with statutory and contractual requirements; and
- evaluation of governance to monitor and improve its quality and impact.

The Board of Directors may delegate any of its powers or functions to any Director, Committee (including a Local Governing Body), the CEO or any other holder of an executive office. Through its Scheme of Delegation, the Board has delegated responsibility for a number of its powers and functions to the following bodies:

- Finance & General Purposes Committee
- Curriculum, Achievement & Standards Committee
- Local Governing Bodies of each school in the Trust

Directors understand that, whilst delegating these powers and functions, they are still the ultimate accountable body for every aspect of the Trust's work.

The Board of Directors retains exclusive responsibility for the following aspects of the Trust's work:

- Delivery of the Trust's charitable objects for the public benefit;

- Ensuring compliance with the Trust's duties under company law and charity law and any agreements made with the DfE, including the Funding Agreement;
- The determination of the educational character and mission of the Trust;
- Ensuring the solvency of the Trust and safeguarding its assets;
- The appointment or dismissal of the following roles: Chief Executive Officer, Chief Operating Officer, Chief Finance Officer. In the case of Headteachers, representatives from the appropriate Local Governing Body will also be involved;
- Ensuring the continued charitable status of the company;
- Setting key strategic objectives and associated key performance indicators and reviewing performance against these;
- Reviewing the Trust's Strategic Plan;
- Determining the establishment, constitution, membership, proceedings, delegated powers and functions of the Local Governing Bodies;
- Approve a balanced budget
- Approval of all statutory policies across the Trust;
- Approval of the Trust's year end accounts and report;
- Entering into all contracts on behalf of the Trust;
- Authorising expenditure or income in line with the Trust's Scheme of Delegation;
- Approving the pay structure for the Trust.

5.4 Chair of the Board of Directors

The Chair plays an important role, with responsibility for leading the Board of Directors and for convening and chairing meetings. As the main link between the Board and the CEO and senior leaders, s/he works to build strong partnerships across the Trust.

The Chair liaises with the CEO, COO and CFO to ensure the final agendas for meetings, as well as the management of papers and appropriate records, are in place.

The Chair is responsible for promoting the development of the Board as a whole.

With support from the Diocese, Members and Directors, the Chair plays a decisive part in determining the appointment and re-appointment of Directors.

The Chair also ensures that the Board is effective in challenging and supporting the educational and financial performance of the Trust.

5.5 Operating Procedures for the Board of Directors

The Board of Directors operating procedures are guided by the Trust's Articles of Association and are as follows:

- The Board of Directors meets at least termly;
- Absence by Directors from meetings is not consented to if there are two consecutive absences;
- The Chair and Vice Chair of the Board of Directors are elected annually at the first meeting of the academic year;
- The Board of Directors has established a local governance committee for each school – Local Governing Body – which meets once per term;
- The Board of Directors has established a Finance & General Purposes Committee and a Curriculum, Achievements & Standards Committee, which meet at least half-termly;
- The quorum for a meeting of the Board of Directors is any three Directors, or where greater, any one third (rounded up to a whole number) of the total number of Directors holding

office at the date of the meeting, who are in each case present at the meeting and entitled to vote on the matters to be resolved;

- The Board of Directors has established a Code of Conduct for Directors which each Director is asked to affirm to at the first meeting of each academic year;
- The Board of Directors prepares an Annual Report in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice and this is filed with the Secretary of State and the Principal Regulator by 31st December of each Academy Financial Year;
- The Board of Directors appoints the Governance Professional;
- Each Director will update his/her Register of Business Interests at the start of the school year and then keep it under regular review.

5.6 Committees of the Board of Directors

The Board has agreed to establish a number of committees, as identified in its Scheme of Delegation, to carry out some of its governance functions. This includes a *Finance, Audit & General Purposes Committee*, a *Curriculum, Achievement & Standards Committee* plus a local governance committee for each school in the Trust. The local governance committee for each school is called the *Local Governing Body*.

The constitution, membership and proceedings of any committee is determined by the Board of Directors. These arrangements will be reflected in each committee's Terms of Reference.

The Board can create additional Committees, Working Parties or Panels as required and the Board may remove delegations from any Committee, Working Party or Panel if required.

Finance, Audit, Risk & General Purposes Committee - this committee assists the Board in its on-going oversight of the Trust's arrangements for budgeting, financial planning, financial performance and financial reporting in respect of both revenue and capital activities and the associated resource planning. It assesses the scope and effectiveness of the systems established to identify, manage and monitor financial and non-financial risks to the Trust via the Risk Register. It also maintains an oversight of the Trust's governance, internal control, financial reporting and value for money frameworks in order to establish levels of compliance throughout the Trust.

This committee ensures regularity and propriety in use of the Trust's funds, and helps to achieve economy, efficiency and effectiveness – thus ensuring that the Trust provides value for money in the use of the public funding it receives.

Curriculum, Achievement & Standards Committee - this committee will assist the Board in its on-going oversight of the Trust's quality of teaching and learning and its impact on pupils' learning and progress, behaviour and personal development. It will also analyse the end of key stage performance in statutory assessments and evaluate how well the Trust and its schools compare to local and national outcomes. The committee will ensure that the educational objectives identified in the Trust's Strategic Plan are reflected in school priorities and that this work is enabling the Trust to achieve its commitment in providing children with high achievement, confidence and enrichment, developed through excellent teaching, stimulating curriculums, and strong moral values.

The terms of reference for these committees can be found at **Appendix 2**.

5.7 Role of the Chief Executive Officer

The role of the CEO is to implement the strategic framework established by the Board of Directors, which they will help develop. Crucially, it is the CEO who is responsible for the operational and day-to-day running of the Trust and its schools, with clear accountability to the Board for this.

One of the CEO's responsibilities is to provide information to the Board of Directors so that the Board can meet their three core objectives. Directors should agree with the CEO the data and information they need in order to fulfil their duties. The aim should be to avoid duplication and unnecessary additional workload for leaders and teachers, while ensuring Directors receive the information they need to assist them in meeting their legal duties. The CEO's report to the Board need not be extensive but it should provide management information and data, relating to the whole Academy Trust's pupil performance, latest positions regarding priority areas for improvement, staffing updates, financial information etc., therefore supporting the Board to undertake their strategic function. The Board of Directors will use the information to inform their discussions and challenge the CEO, and it is for the whole Board, as part of their core functions, to performance manage the CEO. Therefore, the Board of Directors will need to have this information in advance of Board meetings.

5.8 Melrose Learning Trust Accounting Officer

The Accounting Officer role includes specific responsibilities for financial matters. It includes a personal responsibility to Parliament, and to ESFA's accounting officer, for the Trust's financial resources. Accounting officers must be able to assure Parliament, and the public, of high standards of probity in the management of public funds, particularly regularity, propriety and value for money.

The accounting officer must have oversight of financial transactions, by:

- ensuring the Academy Trust's property and assets are under the Directors' control, and measures exist to prevent losses or misuse;
- ensuring bank accounts, financial systems and financial records are operated by more than one person;
- keeping full and accurate accounting records to support their annual accounts.

The CEO is the designated Accounting Officer for the Melrose Learning Trust.

6. Local Governing Bodies

6.1 Melrose Learning Trust – Local Governing Bodies

In accordance with the Trust's Articles of Association, the Board of Directors of the Melrose Learning Trust is responsible for determining the local governance arrangements for the Melrose Learning Trust.

The Directors shall ensure that any Local Governing Body constituted in respect of any school that had previously been a Voluntary Aided School immediately prior to conversion to academy status shall have all its members (except elected parent and any staff members) appointed by the Directors with the consent of the Diocesan Corporate Member.

The Board has agreed that all schools in the Trust will have a Local Governing Body with the following composition (as resolved by the Board at its meeting of 12th January 2021):

- Parent Governors – 2 parent governors elected by the parent body of the school
- Headteacher (ex-officio)
- Staff Governor – 1 staff member elected by the staffing establishment of the school
- Director appointed Governors – 5 Director appointed governors

Director-appointed governors are appointed by the Board of Directors following a recommendation by the Chair of the Local Governing Body. The Chair of the Local Governing Body provides a supporting statement for each recommendation identifying the skills, knowledge and experience that the nominee will bring to the role.

The supporting statement will be presented by the Clerk to the next available meeting of the Board of Directors for discussion and approval. The Chair of the Board of Directors can authorise a recommendation should the timescale to the next Board meeting require this. The approval will then be reviewed at the next meeting of the Board of Directors and confirmed as appropriate.

Staff and Parent Governors are elected by secret ballot through a process confirmed by the Board of Directors.

The Headteacher is an ex-officio appointment – by virtue of the role.

All persons appointed or elected to the Local Governing Body shall, on appointment, give a written undertaking to uphold the objects, vision, mission and religious character of the Melrose Learning Trust.

Governors will sign Melrose Learning Trust's Code of Conduct for Governance at the first meeting of the Local Governing Body each academic year. All Governors will also be required to complete the Trust's Annual Register of Business Interests and be responsible for keeping this register under regular review and up to date.

All Governors will serve for 4-years with the exception of Director appointed governors where Directors will determine the term of office.

Governors who are absent from all Local Governing Body meetings without the consent of the LGB membership within a period of six months (or 3 consecutive meetings) will have been deemed to have vacated their membership of the Local Governing Body.

Local Governing Bodies will elect and appoint their Chair / Vice Chair at the first Local Governing Body meeting of each academic year. Directors may appoint/remove the Chair and/or Vice-Chair of the Local Governing Body at any time should they deem that the situation requires this.

The Local Governing Body will meet at least once per term in every school year.

The quorum for a meeting of the Local Governing Body will be any four of the governors of the Local Governing Body. The Directors (all or any of them) shall also be entitled to attend any meetings of the Local Governing Body. Any Director attending a meeting of the Local Governing Body shall not count towards the quorum for the purposes of the meeting and shall not be entitled to vote on any resolution being considered by the Local Governing Body unless the school's overall effectiveness Ofsted judgement is at Grade 3 (Requires Improvement) or Grade 4 (Inadequate).

The responsibilities delegated to the Local Governing Body are identified in Melrose Learning Trust's Scheme of Delegation document. The Scheme of Delegation will be reviewed and consulted on an annual basis by the Board of Directors.

Each Local Governing Body will develop an annual Governance Action Plan that will show how the Local Governing Body will improve and develop its effectiveness. Each Local Governing Body will undertake an annual review of its own effectiveness, and this will contribute to the development of the Governance Action Plan.

Each Local Governing Body will undertake a planned programme of monitoring against the school's priorities for improvement. This will involve additional time in the school outside of scheduled governing body meetings and be undertaken through appropriate monitoring visits and arrangements in consultation with the Headteacher.

6.2 Role of the Local Governing Body

To contribute to the work of the Learning Trust in ensuring high standards of achievement for all young people in the school by:

- Keeping the focus on school improvement.
- Being a critical friend to the school, offering support and advice.
- Providing assurances to the Board about school performance and about the views of staff, parents and students.
- Helping the school respond to the needs of parents and the community.
- Making the school accountable to the public for what it does.
- Working with the school on planning, developing policies and keeping these under review.
- Working with the Headteacher and school staff to exercise the powers and responsibilities delegated by the Board through the process of earned autonomy; and
- Not intervening in the day-to-day management of the school unless there are weaknesses, and a suitable course of action has been approved by the Board of the Learning Trust.

6.3 The role of the Local Governor

The Trust has a clear expectation of the role of a Local Governor, but the Trust is also keen that governors, in turn, receive positive benefit from undertaking the role.

Governors are expected to:

- Uphold the objects, vision and mission of Melrose Learning Trust and work in the best interests of the school and its pupils;
- Attend the business meetings of the LGB and any other meetings as required;
- Get involved in the wider work of the LGB – monitoring and reporting on specific aspects of the work of the school;
- Work as a team member of the LGB and not as an individual;
- Show an interest in all aspects of the life of the school;
- Become familiar with the Code of Conduct for Local Governors;

- Attend training and development opportunities that will enhance their skills and understanding of governance;
- Respect the confidentiality of all that is seen and heard.

In return, we hope that the role will give governors:

- A sense of purpose that comes from helping the school and its pupils;
- The satisfaction of giving something back to the community;
- A sense of achievement from helping pupils to excel;
- The satisfaction of developing their own skills and knowledge in order to help them fulfil their duties and responsibilities;
- A pride in their school and all that it achieves;
- Enjoyment from being part of a team that helps to make a difference to the lives of young people.

6.4 Sub Committees of the Local Governing Body (Optional)

The Trust fully supports its schools in maintaining their own unique identity whilst working together to ensure the educational potential of each child is developed and grown. Whilst not a specific requirement of the Trust, some Local Governing Bodies may choose to maintain sub-committees or working groups, allowing for more focused attention to specific areas or themes as they feel appropriate. As examples, sub committees may include:

- Resources Committee
- Curriculum Committee
- Christian Character Committee

6.5 Governance in Church of England Schools

In a Church of England school, all governors should ensure that:

- The mission statement has the Anglican emphasis clearly stated.
- The character and quality of RE is in line with the school's trust deed.
- They are aware of the legal requirements for RE in a church school, and of the advice from the Board of Education on the development of the RE curriculum.
- The RE syllabus adopted, including the faiths to be studied, and the standards achieved in the subject in school.
- Resources made available for RE and collective worship are at least equivalent to the level provided for foundation subjects at least 5% of curriculum time is assigned to RE.
- A Link Governor, (for example, a Foundation nominated Governor approved by the Directors), is appointed to liaise with the subject leader and keep the Board of Directors informed and aware of subject needs in RE.
- RE regularly forms part of the school's improvement plan and self-evaluation procedures.
- Collective worship is planned with due regard to the Anglican dimension and the Christian year.
- When appointing new staff, that these appointments are in accord with the mission of the school.
- They support the Headteacher and senior leaders in their roles as spiritual leaders.

Governors should also monitor:

- The contribution of RE and collective worship to the spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development of pupils.
- The quality of self-evaluation and the evidence used to support judgements on the four key questions of a SIAMS inspection.

- The way in which the Christian character of the school is reflected in the Ofsted “self-evaluation” evidence base and judgements.
- The quality of links with the local parish.
- The progress of students/pupils in RE and the standards reached.
- The impact of collective worship on the spiritual development of staff and students.
- The quality of experiences provided by the school such as visits and visitors on the pupils’ spiritual development.
- The way in which the school environment reflects the Christian and Anglican character of the school.

6.6 Link Governors

Local Governing Bodies should consider the appointment of Link Governors who will take a lead in monitoring and reporting on key aspects of school life. As a minimum, local governing bodies should consider the appointment of Link Governors to the following areas:

- Safeguarding
- SEND
- Curriculum

6.6 Code of Conduct

The Trust has its own Code of Conduct for governors and, as each governor is a holder of a public office, the following (Nolan) principles apply to everyone in public office. Governors are expected to uphold them at all times:

Selflessness - Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

Integrity - Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

Objectivity - Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

Accountability - Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

Openness - Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

Honesty - Holders of public office should be truthful.

Leadership - Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

6.7 Governor Visits and Monitoring

As referenced earlier, one of the key roles and responsibilities for the Local Governing Body is to monitor the progress and performance of the school. Undertaking visits which focus on an aspect of the School Development Plan (SDP) or one of the governor’s statutory duties demonstrates the

governor role in the strategic management of the school by helping to hold the school to account and evaluate its progress. To share this responsibility, each governor is encouraged to make at least one visit a year during school time. Good practice may also see governors monitoring assigned areas of focus in pairs, in line with an agreed programme / schedule of visits and reporting for the year. See **Appendix 4i** which offers a schedule template for completion.

Governors are an important part of the school team and are welcomed into school by staff. It is important that governors remember to respect the professionals and the pupils, support the Headteacher and the staff, and acknowledge that they represent the full governing body.

If the agreed principles and procedures are followed then the Governor Monitoring Visit will be an enjoyable experience for all involved and will result in effective monitoring and its contribution to school improvement.

Governor Monitoring Visits

Visits enable governors to:

- Get to know staff and pupils, and demonstrate their commitment to the school
- Give active support to the staff / pupils and the activities of the school
- Be aware of the impact of change and different approaches to teaching and learning
- Evaluate resources and discuss with staff further requirements
- Gain first-hand information to assist with policy making / decision making
- Work in partnership with staff
- See the school at work and observe the range of attitudes, behaviour and achievements

Closer links between governors and staff offers potential benefits for both. For governors, these include:

- More informed understanding of classroom life and practice
- Opportunities to meet and chat with pupils and staff
- Seeing the delivery policies, procedures and schemes of work in practice
- Finding out what resources are being used and what else is needed

For teachers, the benefits will include:

- Opportunity to find out more about the role of the governor
- Having chance and opportunity to illustrate theory and policy in practice
- Opportunity to draw attention to any issues or questions they wish to raise
- Opportunity to reflect on practice through discussion

For children, the benefits will include:

- Knowing who school governors are in school
- More understanding of what a governor's role is in school
- More opportunity to provide their opinion and perspective on school life
- An opportunity to talk about school life with someone different to a staff member

Preparing for governor monitoring visits and reporting

Before making a visit, governors should:

- Contact the Headteacher and agree a date, time and focus for the visit. (Ideally, this should be undertaken at the beginning of the year in the production of an agreed Governor Monitoring schedule for the academic year which sets out areas to be the focus of a monitoring visit, who will undertake the visit and when).
- Prime focus of monitoring should be aligned to priorities of the school development plan but other areas should also be picked up over the course of the year which will include Safeguarding, SEND, Pupil Premium, Attendance and Health & Safety
- Clarify the etiquette, courtesies and expectations for the visit.
- Plan which classes will be visited as part of the monitoring and draw up a timetable for the time in school.
- Headteacher to ensure that all staff are aware in advance of the visit and the expectations on them.

On the day of the visit, governors should remember to:

- Arrive on time and clarify / confirm the timetable of activities for the monitoring visit with the Headteacher.
- Act as an observer and only participate in class activities at the invitation of the teacher.
- Respect the professionalism of the teacher, supporting but not interfering.
- Be calm and enjoy the visit.

After the visit, the governor(s) will:

- Remember to thank the teachers and pupils for their time in supporting the visit.
- Meet with the Headteacher to offer a verbal report and to raise any issues observed during the course of the visit that will be reflected within the written report.
- Complete the Governor Monitoring Report template (**see Appendix 4ii**), reporting on the focus and observations of the visit. The completed report should be given to the Headteacher for comment / amendment as appropriate after which it will be circulated to all governors.
- It is important to note that governors must report without giving opinions and where possible, individuals should not be identified.

It is important to remember that visits are a snapshot in time and judgements should not be made arbitrarily. **The visit is not about:**

- Inspection
- Making judgements about the professional expertise of the teacher
- Checking on your own children
- Pursuing a personal agenda
- Arriving with inflexible, pre-conceived ideas

Conducting Observations

After planning your visit to the school with the Headteacher, you might have agreed to:

- Agree a structure / framework questions that will support and maintain a focus for the visit.
- Take part in a lesson acting as classroom helper during your visit
- Do a formal observation – taking no immediate role other than talking to pupils about what they are doing.
- Work with a small group.
- Introduce yourself to your linked class and answer any of their questions.

- Meet with the class teacher or coordinator to set the context or discuss issues.
- Observe – focussing on an agreed area / issue that the Headteacher would welcome some feedback on. As referenced earlier, please remember that classroom observations do not require judgement on the teacher.

It might also be useful to clarify and agree some ‘what ifs’ before a visit is made as part of the planning process. For example:

- What if I see pupils misbehaving when the teacher doesn’t?
- What if a pupil asks me how to do something?
- What if I have a suggestion to make?

Providing Feedback

It is important that a time is agreed between yourself and the Headteacher to discuss your visit and observations made. During this feedback, you might refer to notes you have made. The structure might include:

- Asking the Headteacher for any further clarification of a lesson
- Giving your own impressions on what you saw / how the lesson went.
- Providing any positive comments.
- Raising any issues that appeared to develop.
- Any further questions you might have.
- A summary of the feedback you will be giving to the full governing body.

At the end of the feedback, both you and the Headteacher should be clear about what you will be sharing with the governing body. There should be no surprises!

Governor Monitoring - Reporting Template

The Governor Monitoring Report template should be completed as soon as possible following the visit (you may wish to build in time during the visit for its completion). The report should reflect the discussion you have had with staff and pupils. The report should be shared with and discussed with the Headteacher following which it will be circulated to all governors.

Summary of the ‘ground rules’ to follow

	Always	Never
Before	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange details of visit • Agree purpose of visit • Discuss aspects to be observed • Agree structure of questions to be explored 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turn up unannounced in normal circumstances
During	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep to the role agreed • Keep questions for staff until after the visit is over • Please remember confidentiality • Stick to the times and purpose agreed • Be sensitive to the mood in the setting and the expectations of the children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assume a different role • Walk in with a clipboard • Distract the pupils from their tasks

After	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Thank the staff and the pupils• Provide feedback to the Headteacher and agree content of your written report.• Feedback to the Local Governing Body / Trust Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Leave without acknowledgement• Break rules of confidentiality
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7. Melrose Learning Trust – Scheme of Delegation

The Scheme of Delegation sets out the powers that the Board, its Committees and the Trust's senior leaders may exercise on behalf of the Directors. The Scheme of Delegation is supported by Terms of Reference for each Committee. The Scheme of Delegation is subject to annual review by the Board of Directors to ensure that it remains fit for purpose.

The Scheme of Delegation for Melrose Learning Trust has the following characteristics:

- details all the Committees that have been established by the Board and explains in headline terms the role and remit of each;
- provides full clarity on which governance functions are retained at Board level and which are delegated, making clear where all key governance functions are exercised in respect of each school – including vision, budget setting, executive leader oversight and performance mgt;
- explains the Board's parental and community engagement arrangements and how these feed into and inform governance both at Board level and at the level of the individual academies;
- drafted clearly so that everyone in the organisation understands it, in order to be clear about their role and that of others; and
- explains the circumstances in which the arrangements set out may vary: including both the timeframes for the overall scheme being reviewed and updated, and any triggers that might lead the Board to review or change levels of delegations for individual academies.

The Scheme of Delegation for the Trust identifies that, in general terms, the Local Governing Body is responsible for the following:

- Providing leadership for the strategic planning of the school through a Board approved School Improvement Plan, including the 3-year strategic headlines;
- Monitoring progress made by the school against the key priorities for improvement identified in the school improvement plan;
- Holding the school's senior leaders to account for the performance of all staff through the school's performance management arrangements;
- Monitoring those areas identified by the Trust as being priority areas for the development of the Trust;
- Ensuring that the safeguarding and wellbeing of staff and pupils are kept under constant review;
- Determining annually, in consultation with the CEO and CFO, the staffing structure of the school;
- Recommending, in consultation with the CEO & CFO, the annual budget and three-year financial plan for approval by the Board of Trustees;
- Reviewing spending on a regular basis against the agreed budget;
- Ensuring that what is happening in the school reflects the agreed policies of the Board of Directors;
- Reporting annually to the Board of the Directors on the discharge of its responsibilities and the resulting impact of its work.

It is important that Directors and Local Governing Bodies understand what is expected of them as the Ofsted Inspection Framework expects inspectors to establish what the governance structure of the school is, with reference to the range of functions designated to Local Governing Bodies. The Scheme of Delegation can be found on the Trust website in the Governance folder.

8. Supporting Melrose Learning Trust Board and LGB Meetings - Checklist

This section highlights and suggests some of the key activities needed in preparing the business for the coming academic year. It also offers a framework of actions in the preparation for and in support of each Board / Local Governing Body meeting.

8.1 Preparation for the commencement of the academic year

- Develop and agree a governance “Decision Planner” for the academic year based on known key activities across the year and required decision making points / deadlines (CEO / Chair / CFO / Governance Lead).
- Determine the number and timing of required meetings across the year for Members (AGM plus any required General Meetings of the Members), the Trust Board and its local governing bodies. Produce a schedule of proposed meetings dates across the year from this (Governance Lead – CEO / Chair / CFO to approve).
- Risk Registers – for both Board and Local Governing Bodies (COO/CFO/ CEO)
- Melrose Learning Trust Governance Code of Conduct – review in readiness for Board members and governors to sign up to for the year (Governance Lead / CEO / Chair / CFO)
- Governance Development Plan – draft governance development plan template (and guidance as appropriate) for Board and Local Governing Bodies to populate and work to over the year as appropriate. (Governance Lead / CFO / CEO / Chair)
- Governor Monitoring Schedule – draft governance monitoring schedule for each Local Governing Body to populate (in line with the strategic objectives for each school?) as appropriate. Schedule to cover areas to monitor, who on the governing body this is allocated to and dates for site visits / monitoring to take place.
- Register of Business Interests – prepare Register of Business Interests for each Board member and Local Governing Body governor to complete for the academic year. Registers to be a standing item on each agenda to ensure update across the year.
- Produce a set of draft agendas that will support the business of each identified meeting (Board and Local Governing Body) for the academic year (Governance Lead – CEO / Chair / CFO to approve). Standing items of business on each agenda should include the following:
 - Apologies for Absence – Board Members or Governors to consent to the absence of any tended apologies
 - Declaration of Pecuniary and Personal Interests relating to items on the agenda
 - Register of Business Interests 2020 / 2021 – all Board members and Local Governing Body governors to confirm that their register is complete and up to date.
 - Publication of governance information on school website and DfE’s Get Information About Schools website (GIAS) – all to confirm that websites are up to date.
 - Membership Update – confirmation of appointments, vacancies, term of office expiry.
 - Minutes and Matters Arising from the previous meeting
 - Governance Development – review / update (LGB Meetings)
 - Governor Monitoring (LGB Meetings)
 - Headteacher or CEO Report (in line with reporting requirements)
 - Safeguarding Update – inc Attendance and Exclusions (some Headteachers include as part of Headteacher Report)
 - Finance Report (in line with reporting requirements)
 - Risk Register – review and update. Red risks identified for each school to be reported to Board.

- Policy Reviews – for review / approval / adoption. Reported as and when in line with the Policy Review schedule.
- Feedback from the Board (or Update from the Trust CEO / Chair) – any items of feedback from the Board, Heads & Chairs meetings etc.
- Feedback to the Board – any items / issues to be reported up to Board level.
- Chairs correspondence
- Any Other Matters of Urgent Business
- Approval of items for inspection – confirmation that all papers presented at the meeting (inc minutes and agenda) can be available for public inspection if requested. Items considered confidential would be identified and not approved or redacted.
- Date & Time of Next Meeting
- Prepare Attendance Register pro-forma for completion at each meeting.
- Consider arrangements for video conference meetings rather than face to face should this be necessary. Refer to NGA guidance on conducting meetings via video conference.

Agenda for the legally required Annual General Meeting with Members of the Trust (January / February) to be prepared with proxy voting paper. Calling Notice and supporting papers to be circulated no less than 14 days before the meeting.

Broader activities will include taking a lead in reviewing / maintaining the Trust's Governance Handbook to an agreed frequency and reviewing (annually) the Trust's Code of Conduct for its Board Members / Local Governing Body governors.

8.2 Preparation for and support offered to each meeting

- Board agendas to be finalised at least 2 weeks in advance of the scheduled meeting date (Governance Lead / CEO / CFO / Chair).
- Calling Notice and supporting papers for the meeting to be circulated at least 7 days prior to the meeting (Governance Lead). In this communication, decide whether it is appropriate to invite questions to the papers circulated in advance of the meeting, allowing time for the CEO or Headteacher to prepare response. These can then be captured in the minutes to further demonstrate challenge (useful where some bodies may be less vocal and challenging in the actual meeting).
- Pre-meeting with the CEO /Chair (Board) or Headteacher/Chair (Local Governing Body) to run through the agenda and support the Chair in managing the business identified.
- Attendance register to be signed by all attendees with school website updated.
- Minutes to be taken at the meeting providing a good summary of the discussion, required actions and resolutions.
- Action Notes from the meeting (to an agreed format) to be written up and circulated to the CEO / Chair (Board) or Headteacher / Chair (Local Governing Body) within 24 hours of the meeting.
- Draft minutes of the meeting (to an agreed format) to be written up and circulated to the CEO / Chair (Board or Headteacher / Chair (Local Governing Body) within 7 days of the meeting. Opportunity provided for any required amendments to the minutes as appropriate.
- Minutes to be circulated to all members of the Board / Local Governing Body following CEO / Chair (Board) or Headteacher / Chair (LGB) "approval".
- Actions to be tracked and followed up as appropriate. Position statement on the agreed actions to be reported at the next meeting using the Actions Note proforma ... or from actions identified in the minutes and covered under Matters Arising.

- Risk Registers to be updated in line with discussion and agreed actions at each meeting. Identified Red Risks for each school to be reported to Board against an agreed format.
- All governance documents to be well maintained and easily accessible for audit purposes (refer to Academy Trust Handbook and the Trust’s Internal Assurance Programme for Audit checklist).

9. Glossary of Terms used in Education

Acronym	Long form	Description
School information		
AEO	Area education officer	[Maintained schools] A role provided by the LA providing education and school improvement support to school leaders.
APS	Alternative provision school	Provision of education for pupils who do not attend mainstream schools for a number of complex reasons such as exclusion, behavioural issues or refusal to attend.

EAL	English as an additional language	A term used to identify pupils for whom English is not the primary language spoken in their home.
ECM	Every Child Matters	A green paper which identified five outcomes that are most important to children: be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution.
EHE	Elective home education	Refers to pupils who are removed from the school register to be educated at home.
ESW	Education social worker	An external professional who provides support to parents, pupils and school staff to identify needs that act as barriers to learning and signpost them to additional services.
EVER 6 FSM	Ever 6 Free School Meals	Schools receive Pupil Premium funding to support the learning of those pupils entitled to free school meal. This funding continues for a further 6 years even if the child is no longer entitled to receive free school meals within that period.
EWO	Education welfare officer	An external professional who supports pupils and their families with attendance issues.
EYDP	Early years development plan	An action plan for improvement and development in the early years foundation stage.
EYFS	Early years foundation stage	Educational provision from birth to five years old. Includes a set of standards for the learning, development and care of children from birth to five years.
EYFSP	Early years foundation stage profile	A statutory development attainment summary for every pupil within the early years foundation stage. Completed at the end of Reception.
FE	Further education	FE refers to additional education beyond what has been received at a secondary school, also referred to as post-16 education.
FSM	Free school meals	Families can apply for their child to receive a free lunchtime meal if they are in receipt of any one of several income-related support payments.
GIAS	Get information about schools	A statutory on-line register for schools to upload information to, includes information about governors such as names of governors and schools where they govern.
H&S	Health and safety	Relates to all matters regarding the health and safety of pupils, staff, volunteers and visitors to school.
HE	Higher education	An optional final stage of formal education that occurs after the completion of secondary education.
HSA	Home school agreement	A statement explaining the school's aims and values, its responsibilities towards its pupils, the responsibilities of pupils' parents and what is expected of pupils.
ICT	Information and communication technology	Information sharing and communication equipment available to pupils and staff.
INSET	In-service education and training	Training for teachers and school staff held during term time.
KS	Key stage	Relates to a period of time in a pupil's education in the state sector and sets out the educational knowledge expected during each stage. KS1 – Years 1 and 2 (Primary) KS2 – Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 (Primary) KS3 – Years 7, 8 and 9 (Secondary) KS4 – Years 10 and 11 (Secondary)
LGBTQ+	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer	Term relating to a community of people, protected by the Equalities Act (2010) who identify as a lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender.
MER	Monitoring, evaluation and review	A process of measuring and assessing a programme of activities and the results to identify impact and determine whether any changes are required.
PAN	Published admission number	The maximum number of pupils that the admissions authority will admit to each year group in a school.
PP	Pupil Premium Funding	Pupil premium is government funding to improve education outcomes for disadvantaged pupils in schools in England. Funding allocated to a school is based on the number of children on roll eligible for free school meals.
PPA	Planning, preparation and assessment	The statutory provision of non-teaching time allocated to teachers to plan and prepare their teaching and undertake pupil assessment.
PRP	Performance related pay	The term given to pay progression based on an employee's performance and meeting set targets.

PRU	Pupil referral unit	An education establishment for pupils who do not attend mainstream schools for a number of complex reasons such as exclusion, behavioural issues or refusal to attend.
PTA	Parent teacher association	A charitable group, separate to the management of the school, set up by parents who organise events to raise additional funds to benefit pupils' learning and enrichment.
PTR	Pupil teacher ratio	The legal number of adults needed to look after a group of pupils, dependent on the age of the pupils.
RAP	Rapid action plan	A short-term plan intended to support rapid and sustainable school improvement.
QT	Qualified teacher	The term given to a person who has achieved the required qualifications to teach.
QTS	Qualified teacher status	A requirement in England to work as a teacher of children in state schools and special schools.
SDP	School development plan	The school's strategic plan for development which includes identified priorities, actions, resources needed and the outcomes and impact it intends to achieve.
SEF	School evaluation form	A recommended but non-statutory self-review process used to inform the SDP.
SIMS	School information management system	An information system which stores all information relating to pupils.
SLT	Senior leadership team	Staff members who have been delegated leadership responsibilities in a school.
UIFSM	Universal infant free school meals	The provision of a free lunchtime meal for all pupils in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2.
ULN	Unique learner number	A reference number which is used to access the personal learning record for any pupil over the age of 13 who is accessing education or training.
UPN	Unique pupil number	A number allocated to identify individual pupils within all state-funded schools.
URN	Unique reference number	A unique identification number given to all schools.
VA	Voluntary aided	A state funded school in which a foundation or trust contribute to the building costs and may own the school land or buildings. The foundation or trust has a substantial influence on the governance of the school. The governing board is the employer and sets the admission criteria. Usually, but not always, the foundation or trust is a religious organisation.
VC	Voluntarily controlled	A state funded school in which a foundation or trust may own the school land or buildings. Representatives from the foundation or trust are appointed to the governing board. Usually, but not always, the foundation or trust is a religious organisation. The LA – or in the case of an academy, the trust – employs the staff and determines the admissions criteria.
Teaching and learning		
D&T	Design and technology	A core, practical national curriculum subject designed to develop pupils' creativity, technical and problem-solving skills.
EBACC	English baccalaureate	A set of core subjects to be taught at secondary school as part of the GCSE curriculum. Includes: English language and literature, maths, chemistry, physics and biology, geography or history and a language.
FBV	Fundamental British values	A set of values which must be taught in all British schools. The values are: democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs and for those without faith.
MA&T	More-able and talented	Pupils identified as demonstrating consistently high performance in specific academic, creative, sporting, artistic or leadership areas.
MFL	Modern foreign	Relates to the teaching of languages within the national curriculum framework which are spoken in the modern world.
NC	National curriculum	[Maintained schools] The statutory programme of study and attainment targets for all subjects for all four key stages in maintained schools. [Academies] Academy schools may choose to follow the national curriculum but are not required to.
PE	Physical education	A core statutory national curriculum subject which provides pupils the opportunity to participate in physical exercise and competitive sports.
RE	Religious education	The statutory teaching of religions and their individual and varied aspects, including: beliefs, doctrines, rituals, customs, rites and personal roles. A

		statutory teaching requirement but parents are permitted to withdraw their child for all or part of the lesson. Faith schools and academies are able to set their own RE syllabus.
RSHE	Relationships, sex & health education	A compulsory subject from Year 7 for all pupils. Includes the teaching of sexual health, reproduction and sexuality as well as promoting positive relationships.
SMSC	Spiritual, moral, social and cultural	The non-statutory teaching of spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues to pupils.
STEM	Science, technology, engineering and mathematics	The teaching of science, technology, engineering and mathematics as an inter-disciplinary approach.
UCAS	University and colleges admissions service	[Secondary schools] An organisation whose main role is to operate the application process for universities.
School data and national tests		
AfL	Assessment for learning	An assessment approach used by teaching staff to engage with pupils to assess their stage of learning, identify any gaps in learning and establish the next steps.
ASP	Analyse school performance	A summary of individual school's pupil performance data provided by the DfE. Progress measures are reported to enable schools to compare their performance against national averages.
AT	Attainment target	A target given to individual pupils usually linked to the end of a key stage to identify their age-related attainment score.
EXS	Expected standard	The attainment standard which pupils are expected to meet at each assessment point during the academic year.
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education	[Secondary schools] National academic qualifications spanning a range of subjects, typically achieved at the end of secondary education.
GDS	Greater depth standard	The age-related attainment standard given to pupils who are working beyond their age-related expected standard.
GLD	Good level of development	The expected standard for pupils in the prime areas of development at the end of the early years foundation stage of their education.
IDSR	Inspection data summary report	A report produced by Ofsted from the Department for Education's performance data for each school. This data, which is available to schools, is used by inspectors during an inspection and includes historic data for the school to evidence performance improvement or decline.
KPI	Key performance indicator	A quantifiable measure used to evaluate success in meeting objectives for performance.
MTC	Multiplication Tables Check	Statutory test for all Year 4 pupils to determine whether pupils can recall their times tables fluently and to identify / target additional support where required.
RBA	Reception Baseline Assessment	Statutory activity-based assessment of pupils (language, communication, literacy and mathematics)
SATs	Standard assessment tests	National statutory assessment tests which pupils take at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2 in maths, reading and SPaG (spelling, punctuation and grammar).
SPaG	Spelling, punctuation and grammar	A national standard assessment test focussing on spelling, punctuation and grammar taken by pupils at the end of both key stage 1 and key stage 2.
STA	Standards and testing agency	The organisation responsible for developing and delivering the national statutory assessment tests (SATs).
Safeguarding and child protection		
CAMHS	Child and adolescent mental health services	A service provided by the NHS to assess and provide treatment for pupils experiencing mental health issues.
CP	Child protection	The protection of children from violence, exploitation, physical and sexual abuse and neglect.
CME	Children missing education	Refers to any school-aged pupil who is not registered with a school or formal education provider e.g. elected home education or has been absent from education provision for four weeks.
CSE	Child sexual exploitation	Refers to the abusive exploitation of children within familial or non-familial relationships.
DBS	Disclosure and barring service	The service that performs the statutory check of criminal records for anyone working or volunteering in a school.
DDSL	Deputy designated safeguarding lead	A member of staff who deputises in the absence of the designated safeguarding lead.

DSL	Designated safeguarding lead	A member of the senior leadership team who has lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection throughout the school.
FGM	Female genital mutilation	The illegal ritual of cutting or removing some or all of the external female genitalia.
KCSiE	Keeping children safe in education	Statutory guidance setting out schools and colleges' duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
LAC	Looked after children	A child who has been placed in local authority care or where children's services have looked after a child for more than a period of 24 hours.
MARF	Multi-agency referral form	The form completed by schools when referring a pupil to social care.
PREVENT	An element of Safeguarding training	One part of government's overall counter-terrorism strategy and radicalization.
SCR	Single central record	A statutory secure record of recruitment and identity checks for all permanent and temporary staff, proprietors, contractors, external coaches and instructors and volunteers who attend the school in a non-visitor capacity.
Special educational needs and disability and additional learning needs		
ADHD	Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder	A condition characterised by difficulty in paying attention, being excessively active or having difficulty controlling behaviour. Symptoms may impact on a pupil's learning and social and emotional development.
ASD	Autistic spectrum disorder	A range of similar conditions that affect social interaction, communication, interests and behaviour. Symptoms may impact on a pupil's learning and social and emotional development.
CAF	Common assessment framework	A standardised assessment used by all children's services to identify additional needs that pupils and their families may have. Outcomes of the assessment are used to promote a coordinated multi-agency support response.
EBD	Emotional and behavioural difficulties	A term referring to the behavioural or emotional responses of a pupil which are different from the expected norm of a child of that age and which adversely affect the pupil's access to education.
EHCP	Education, health and care plan	A funded intervention plan which coordinates the educational, health and social needs for pupils who have significant needs that impact on their learning and access to education. The plan identifies any additional support needs or interventions and the intended impact they will have for the pupil.
EP	Educational psychologist	An EP will work in partnership with families and other agencies to help pupils achieve their full potential using psychology practice and theory.
IEP	Individual education plan	A plan or programme designed for individual pupils with special educational needs to plan the interventions needed to support their learning.
PEP	Personal education plan	A plan produced by the LA setting out the educational needs of looked after children.
PMLD	Profound and multiple learning difficulties	Where a pupil has more than one disability, the most significant being a profound learning disability that impacts on their progress and attainment or behaviour and their social and emotional development.
PSP	Pastoral support plan	A school-based plan to support a pupil's social, emotional and behavioural skills or to offer nurture support in the event of a significant life event or during difficult family circumstances.
SEMH	Social, emotional and mental health	An overarching term for pupils who experience difficulties with regulating their emotional responses and/or social interaction or who are experiencing mental health challenges.
SENCO	Special educational needs coordinator	A statutory role within all schools maintaining oversight and coordinating the implementation of the school's special educational needs policy and provision of education to pupils with special educational needs.
SEND	Special educational needs and disabilities	A pupil is assessed to have SEND if they have a learning problem or disability that makes it more difficult for them to learn than most pupils their age.
Finance and resource management		

AFH	Academies financial handbook	[Academies] Statutory guidance for academy trusts which sets out the financial reporting requirements for trusts – also includes financial management and control guidance.
AFO	Area finance officer	[Maintained schools] A member of staff employed by the local authority who provides financial planning, audit and management support to schools.
AWPU	Age-weighted pupil unit	A rate set by LAs when allocating pre-16 funding entitlement to schools.
CFR	Consistent financial reporting	A framework to collect information about income and expenditure by financial years.
CIF	Condition improvement fund	[Academies] An annual bidding round for eligible academies and sixth-form colleges to apply for capital funding from the Department of Education capital funds budget to support school building improvement work.
ESFA	Education and Skills Funding Agency	An agency sponsored by the Department for Education with accountability for funding education and skills training for children, young people and adults.
FMS	Financial management system	Software used by schools to manage and maintain oversight of income, expenses and assets.
GAG	General annual grant	[Academies] Annual funding allocated to academies for the provision of education.
NFF	National Funding Formula	The methodology used by government to decide how much core funding is allocated for mainstream state-funded schools in England.
PAYE	Pay as you earn	A tax collection system process between the employee, the employer and HM Revenue and Customs.
PE&SFG	PE and sports funding grant	[Primary schools] Additional funding allocated to primary schools to improve the provision of physical education, access to sports and promotion of a healthy lifestyle.
PPG	Pupil premium grant	Additional funding for schools which is allocated to fund additional support for disadvantaged pupils of all abilities and to close attainment gaps between them and their peers.
SFVS	School financial value standard	[Maintained schools] A self-evaluation audit required by the LA to help schools manage their finances and to review financial management systems and processes.
VAT	Value added tax	A tax applied to the purchase of goods or services.
Staffing and pay		
AHT	Assistant Headteacher	A member of the senior leadership team who provides support to the headteacher in the management of the school.
CEO	Chief Executive Officer	[Academies] The most senior member of the executive leadership team, responsible for the day-to-day management of an organisation.
CFO	Chief Finance Officer	[Academies] A senior member of the executive leadership team with responsibility for the day to day financial affairs of the Trust
COO	Chief Operating Officer	[Academies] A senior member of the executive leadership team responsible for the governance, operational and administrative management of the Trust.
CPD	Continuing professional development	The skills, knowledge and experience that staff and volunteers gain both formally and informally to support them in their role and develop in a professional capacity.
DHT	Deputy Headteacher	A member of the senior leadership team who supports the headteacher in the strategic development and day-to-day management of the school. Will deputise in the absence of the headteacher.
ECT	Early Career Teachers	Replaces the term 'newly qualified teachers'. ECT status in place for the first 2 years of a teaching career.
EHT	Executive Headteacher	The strategic leader of a group, federation or collaboration of schools.
FSW	Family support worker	A member of staff employed either by the school or accessed through an external organisation to provide practical and emotional support to families experiencing short or long-term difficulties.
FTE	Full time equivalent	The number of hours worked by an employee on a full-time basis.
HLTA	Higher level teaching assistant	A member of staff who performs all the normal duties of a teaching assistant but with an increased level of responsibility, or who possesses specialised knowledge or experience.
HoD	Head of department	A member of staff who has leadership responsibility for the practice and performance in a specific subject department or key stage.

HT	Headteacher	The lead teacher in a school with ultimate responsibility for the standards of the school and day-to-day management of staff. Responsible for implementing the school vision, values and development plan. In an academy may be referred to as the 'principal'.
HTPM	Headteacher performance management	The performance management process of the headteacher undertaken by an appointed panel of the governing board.
ITT	Initial teacher training	A programme of training to achieve qualified teacher status.
LSA	Learning support advisor	Someone who works closely with teachers and may have responsibility for delivering learning and providing support to individual or groups of children. May be employed by the school or accessed via an external organisation.
LSW	Learning support worker	An employee of the school who works under the direction of the class teacher to deliver learning and provide support to individual or groups of pupils.
MPR/MPS	Main pay range or main pay scale	[Maintained schools] The statutory pay range for teaching staff.
NPQH	National professional qualification for headship	A non-statutory qualification which supports the professional development of serving and aspiring headteachers.
NPQSL	National professional qualification for senior leaders	A non-statutory qualification which supports the professional development of serving and aspiring senior leaders.
NQT	Newly qualified teacher	Teachers who have gained qualified teacher status but have not yet completed the required 12-month induction period.
PIP	Performance improvement plan	A support and development plan implemented to help staff members achieve their potential and improve their practice.
PM	Performance management	A formal process implemented to plan and monitor the actions required to secure and sustain performance or improve employees' performance.
SBM	School business manager	A senior member of staff responsible for managing non-teaching aspects of the school.
STPCD	School teachers' pay and conditions document	[Maintained schools] Statutory guidance for the pay and conditions for teachers in England and Wales.
TA	Teaching assistant	A non-teaching member of staff employed to support pupils within the classroom environment or to facilitate interventions for individual or groups of pupils.
TLR	Teaching and learning responsibility	An additional payment for teachers who take on an extra responsibility in school linked to the provision of teaching and pupils' learning.
UPR/UPS	Upper pay range/Upper pay scale	The incremental pay range open to experienced teachers to apply for when they have successfully reached the top of the main pay scale for teachers.
Governance		
AoA	Articles of Association	[Academies] A statutory document that sets out the role and responsibilities of trustees, how the trustees must conduct the business and administration of the trust and governance requirements.
CoG	Chair of Governors	The person responsible for chairing and leadership of the governing board.
CtG	Clerk to Governors	The professional and legal advisor to governing boards.
IEB	Interim Executive Board	[Maintained schools] An interim executive board can be put in place if the local authority or regional school's commissioner has concerns about a school's governance. A request to implement an IEB has to be submitted to the Secretary of State for education.
LGB	Local Governing Body	[Maintained school] The governing body of a maintained school responsible for ensuring compliance with statutory responsibilities and oversight of the school's strategic plan. [Academies] In an academy, an LGB may be constituted by the Board of Trustees and can only operate within the delegated powers assigned by the Board of Trustees.
MAT	Multi Academy Trust	[Academies] A trust established to undertake strategic collaboration and provide education across a number of schools.
SAT	Single Academy Trust	[Academies] A trust established to undertake strategic collaboration and provide education within a single school.
ToR	Terms of reference	A document that outlines the structure and purpose of the governing board or its appointed panels or committees.
External agencies and inspection		

ASCL	Association of School and College Leaders	A professional, representative organisation for school leaders.
DfE	Department for Education	The national government body with responsibility for children's services, policy and education, including early years, schools, higher and further education policy, apprenticeships and wider skills in England.
HMCI	Her Majesty's Chief Inspector	The person appointed to have statutory responsibility for the inspection and regulatory work of Ofsted and its management. Responsible to Parliament.
HMI	Her Majesty's Inspector	Individuals appointed to undertake the inspection of education settings under the Ofsted inspection framework.
HSE	Health and Safety Executive	The government agency responsible for the regulation and enforcement of workplace health, safety and welfare.
LA	Local Authority	A local government agency responsible for the provision of a range of services in a specified local area, including education.
LGA	Local Government Association	An organisation that comprises all local authorities and seeks to promote improved local government.
NAHT	National Association of Headteachers	A trade union and professional membership association representing headteachers in all schools.
NASEN	National Association of Special Educational Needs	A national organisation which aims to promote equality and fair access in the education, training and development of pupils with additional needs.
NGA	National Governance Association	A membership organisation representing school governors and trustees throughout England.
Ofsted	Office for standards in education	An independent inspection and regulatory body responsible for inspecting services that provide education or care to young people. Required to report directly to Parliament.
Data protection		
DPA	Data Protection Act	Legislative provision for the protection of personal data.
DPO	Data protection officer	The appointed person with responsibility for overseeing data protection strategy and implementation to ensure compliance with the Data Protection Act.
FOI	Freedom of information	Legislative provision providing the right to public access to information held by public authorities, either by publication or by request.
GDPR	General data protection regulation	Legislative provision designed to strengthen the safety and security of all data held within an organisation and ensure that procedures relating to personal data are fair and consistent.
ICO	Information commissioner's office	An independent regulatory body responsible for upholding information rights.
SAR	Subject access request	A request made by an individual to access the personal data which may be held about them.

Appendix 2

Finance, Audit, Risk and General Purposes Committee Terms of Reference

AUTHORITY

The Finance, Audit, Risk and General Purposes Committee is a committee of the MAT Board with delegated powers, as set out below. The Finance, Audit, Risk and General Purposes Committee is authorised to obtain independent professional advice if it considers this necessary.

The FAR&GP Committee also includes the remit of the Audit and Risk Committee. In the conduct of these elements of business:

- Employees of the Trust should not be Audit and Risk Committee members, but the AO (CEO) and CFO should attend to provide information and participate in discussions.
- The Chair of the Board should not be the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee. Where the finance committee and audit and risk committee are separate, the chair should not be the same.
- Where the Audit and Risk Committee is combined with another committee, employees should not participate as members when audit matters are discussed.

DUTIES

To make appropriate comments and recommendations on such matters to the Trust Board on a regular basis on six key areas

- Finance: To ensure sound financial management of the Trust's finances and resources, including proper planning, monitoring and probity in line with the EFA guidelines and the Funding Agreement.
- Audit and risk: agree a programme of work annually to deliver internal scrutiny that provides coverage across the year. Ensure that risks are being addressed through internal scrutiny. Report to the board on the adequacy of the trust's internal control framework, including financial and non-financial controls and management of risks.
- Staffing: To review, plan and manage staffing with due regard to financial aspects and in line with the Pay Policy.
- Premises: To ensure sound management of the Trust's premises including maintenance, development and health and safety.
- Pay: To determine all matters/take all decisions relating to pay and related performance of staff to establish and approve a Trust Pay Policy and to monitor the Policy as necessary.

The specific duties of the Finance and General Purposes Committee will be to:

FINANCE

- review the Annual Budget in detail and to make recommendations to the Board on the budgetary needs of each academy;
- review each Academy's internal and external financial statements and reports to ensure that they reflect best practice, including compliance with the ESFA Academy Trust Handbook and the Charity Commissions Guidance to charities and Charity trustees;
- To monitor and review expenditure on a regular basis and ensure compliance with the overall financial plan for the Trust, and with the financial regulations of the DfE, drawing any matters of concern to the attention of the Trust Board;
- consider all relevant reports by the School Business Manager or the appointed external auditor, including reports on the Academy's accounts, achievement of value for money and the response to any management letters;
- contribute to the formulation of the Trust's improvement plans, through the consideration of financial priorities and proposals, in consultation with the CEO, and within the stated and agreed aims and objectives of the Trust;
- monitor future pupil rolls, provision requirements and income levels;
- review the policy on charging for curriculum activities and make recommendations to the MAT Board
- review the Trust Financial Handbook and make recommendations to the MAT Board;
- appoint bankers and approve banking arrangements including authorised signatories;

- to manage tendering processes and the awarding of contracts in accordance with the Finance Policy.

AUDIT and RISK

- Agree a programme of work annually to deliver internal scrutiny that provides coverage across the year.
- Review the ratings and responses on the risk register to inform the programme of work, ensuring checks are modified as appropriate each year.
- Agree who will perform the work.
- Consider reports at each meeting from those carrying out the programme of work.
- Consider progress in addressing recommendations.
- Consider outputs from other assurance activities by third parties including ESFA financial management and governance reviews, funding reports and investigations.
- Have access to the external auditor, as well as those carrying out internal scrutiny, review their plans and reports and also consider their quality.
- The committee's oversight extends to the financial and non-financial controls and risks at constituent academies.
- Oversight ensures information submitted to DfE and ESFA that affects funding including pupil number returns and funding claims is accurate and in compliance with funding criteria

STAFFING

- review new and existing policies relating to the employment and conditions of staff at the Academy and make recommendations to the MAT Board;
- determine the staffing complement for the Trust in line with the Trust Improvement Plans and oversee any staffing reduction or appointment procedures as necessary including consultation with teacher associations and trade unions as appropriate;
- set the terms and conditions of service and levels of pay of employees having regard to staff who have TUPE transferred;
- consider secondment and early/flexible retirement requests (with the exception of the CEO or Headteachers/Heads of School);
- approve leave of absence (where not delegated to the CEO or Headteachers/Heads of School);
- consider work/life balance, working conditions and well-being, including the monitoring of absence levels;
- agree procedures for capability, discipline, grievance, attendance, whistle blowing and staff welfare issues;
- investigate irregularities (other than where the CEO is suspected), conduct personnel procedures regarding suspension/ending of staff contracts including dismissal procedures (except where delegated to the CEO or Headteacher/Heads of School, or if the dismissal relates to the CEO or Headteacher/Heads of School), drawing on the membership of the Board and the LGB.

PAY

- ensure that the whole school Pay Policy is statutorily compliant, including where relevant the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document.
- in accordance with the Pay Policy, determine appropriate pay ranges for all staff employed within the Trust, including allowances and temporary recruitment and retention payments where appropriate.

PREMISES

- ensure all premises are fit for purpose and that premises and grounds are maintained to a high standard;
- to review the building maintenance plan in order to prepare a list of priorities for maintenance and development and ensure that adequate resources are available;
- consider the relative funding priorities necessary for security, maintenance, repairs and redecoration, and to approve the costs and arrangements within the budget allocation;
- recommend to the Trust a plan for capital expenditure and to implement the plan after approval by the Trust and to monitor expenditure against the plan;
- consider any recommendations for disposal of Trust property and make recommendations to the Board and establishing whether the approval of the Secretary of State is required, in line with Academies Financial Handbook requirements;
- agree any capital bids for work between £10k and £20k;
- recommend a health and safety policy to the MAT Board including the regular review thereof;
- ensure all premises are safe, comply with health & safety regulations and advise the MAT Board on strategic health & safety issues;
- ensure that health & safety, building inspections and risk assessments are carried out in the prescribed manner and timing and that the risk register is maintained.

GENERAL

The F & GP will also:

- Review/Ratify/Recommend to the MAT Board all finance related policies
- Review/Ratify/Recommend to the MAT Board all HR related policies
- Review/Ratify/Recommend to the MAT Board all premises related policies
- Review the operation of the Trust's code of practice for Governor members and code of conduct for staff;

The F&GP will also ensure that procedures are in place to ensure that employees of the academy are paid for work done in accordance with their contracts of employment with the academy. In addition, the F&GP must ensure the academy has adequate insurance cover to support its activities as an employer, such as employers' liability insurance, fidelity insurance, trustee indemnity, public liability insurance and so forth.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The MAT Board will ensure personnel management procedures have been identified, and documented to cover as a minimum:

- recruitment (including references and police checks);
- performance management and review;
- equal opportunities;
- disciplinary (including absence policies);
- grievance;
- staff expenses;

and in relation to staff pay:

- undertake an annual review of staff salaries and consideration of pay discretions and applications for re- grading, including the recommendations of the CEO and Headteacher/Head of School as to salaries, particularly any discretionary awards;
- to ensure that the Policy is applied equitably and consistently for all staff;
- to ensure that pay decisions are fair and equitable, link with the appraisal procedures and take account of the recommendations of the CEO and, where appropriate, other members of the Leadership Team;
- to approve, within the budget, pay progression;
- to ensure that external advice is sought where appropriate, particularly in respect of salary matters relating to the CEO

Curriculum, Achievement & Standards Committee

Terms of Reference

The remit of the Curriculum, Achievement & Standards Committee will assist the Board in its on-going oversight of the Trust's quality of teaching and learning and its impact on pupils' learning and progress, behaviour and personal development. It will also analyse the end of key stage performance in statutory assessments and evaluate how well the Trust and its schools compare to local and national outcomes. The committee will ensure that the educational objectives identified in the Trust's Strategic Plan are reflected in school priorities and that this work is enabling the Trust to achieve its commitment in providing children with high achievement, confidence and enrichment, developed through excellent teaching, stimulating curriculums, and strong moral values.

Terms of reference for this Committee are presented as follows:

- (i) Receive and approve the School Development Plan for each school following discussion and recommendations from each Local Governing Body.
- (ii) Review summary updates from School Improvement Partners and activities, and identify risks and concerns for action by the Local Governing Body and Headteachers.
- (iii) Monitor the development of curriculum at Melrose Learning Trust schools.
- (iv) Review the policy and provision for collective worship, including the right to be consulted by the CEO about arrangements for collective worship.
- (v) To uphold and maintain standards at the schools.
- (vi) Monitor and compare the performance of the Trust schools focusing on progress and achievements against individual school and trust targets.
- (vii) To agree and keep under review the Trust's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and review the levels of incidents from a Trust perspective.
- (viii) To evaluate the impact and effectiveness of strategies linked to improving the performance of SEND and disadvantaged pupils.
- (ix) Monitor levels of attendance across Trust schools.
- (x) Review exclusion / suspension decisions concerning Melrose Learning Trust pupils.
- (xi) To monitor pastoral care to ensure the academic, social, moral, spiritual, cultural and appropriate medical needs of pupils are being met.

The Curriculum, Achievement & Standards Committee will convene at least 3 times per academic year. Membership will be at least 5 Directors, and quorum is a third of serving Directors. In the event of minimum membership, the quorum will be 3.

The Chair and Vice Chair will be Directors other than the Chair and Vice Chair of the Board of Directors. In the absence of the Chair and Vice Chair, the Committee will elect a temporary replacement from among the Directors who are present at the meeting.