

DIOCESE OF **Hexham & Newcastle**
— DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION —



Hexham and Newcastle
Diocesan
Scheme of Delegation

October 2022

Adopted by Bishop Wilkinson Catholic Education Trust October 2022



Bishop Wilkinson
Catholic Education Trust
Through Christ, in Partnership

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PART 1: INTRODUCTION AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: PURPOSE OF SCHEME OF DELEGATION

1. Bishop Wilkinson Catholic Education Trust (referred to herein as the “**Trust**”) is a Catholic multi-academy trust, which has been established by the **Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle**. It is responsible for the running of a number of Catholic schools/academies (referred to as the “**Academies**”).
2. The Academies shall at all times remain Catholic schools, conducted in conformity with any trust deed governing the use of land used by the Trust and in conformity with canon law and with the teachings of the Catholic Church. Both the Trust and the Academies must comply with and observe any advice or directive issued by or on behalf of the Bishop. This includes the **Diocesan Memorandum of Understanding**.
3. The Trust is a company limited by guarantee (Company Number 07890590) and a charity, whose objects are the advancement of the Catholic religion through the provision of a Catholic education. The Trust is not a registered charity but an “exempt” charity, regulated by the Secretary of State for Education, who acts as the principal regulator.
4. The Trust’s constitution is set out in its **Articles of Association**, which delegate responsibility for the governance and management of the Trust to the **Directors**.
5. The Directors have put in place this **Scheme of Delegation** to provide clarity as to the roles and responsibilities of those involved in the governance of the Academies and how decisions are made.
6. The purpose of good governance is to:
 - 6.1. determine the vision and values of the Trust;
 - 6.2. support leadership in determining and fulfilling the strategic direction of the Trust;
 - 6.3. hold leadership to account and ensure staff well-being; and
 - 6.4. oversee the financial performance of the Trust ensuring there are systems in place to manage risk and ensure money is well spent.
7. An overview of the governance structure is set out in the attached structure chart.
8. The **Members** of the Trust oversee the Board of Directors (the “**Trust Board**”), holding the Directors to account and ensuring that the values and ethos of the Trust are upheld and the distinctiveness of the Academies is preserved.
9. The Members are:
 - 9.1. the Bishop of Hexham & Newcastle;
 - 9.2. the Vicar General;
 - 9.3. the Episcopal Vicar for Education;
 - 9.4. the Diocesan Director of Education; and
 - 9.5. the Diocesan Financial Secretary.

10. The Trust Board is made up of both **Foundation Directors** appointed by the Bishop (who shall always be in the majority) and **Co-opted or Non Foundation Directors** appointed by the Trust Board itself with the approval of the Diocese. Whilst Foundation Directors are appointed for a term of 4 years, Co-opted Directors are appointed for a 1-year term and are generally appointed for a specific purpose. In exceptional circumstances, the Trust Board may seek the approval of the Diocese to appoint a Non Foundation Director for a term of 4 years, who must uphold the Catholic mission of the Trust but are not expected to be practicing Catholics. Both Co-opted/ Non Foundation Directors can be removed by both the Bishop and the Trust Board.
11. The Trust Board is the accountable body within the Trust and is responsible for the good governance of the Trust and its Academies.
12. The Trust Board delegates aspects of governance and the day to day oversight of school leadership to a local governing committee (referred to as the “**Local Governing Committee**”).
13. To ensure effective collaboration and the dissemination of good practice, headteachers meet as a **Leadership Group** and some strategic decision making responsibility is vested in this group. It is intended that this group meet regularly and Chairs of Local Governing Committees will be invited to attend two of these meetings a year to provide an opportunity to consider the impact of the Trust as a whole and how it is meeting the needs of its communities with the view to supporting the Trust Board in making strategic decisions about the future priorities for the Trust and its Academies.
14. A **Summary of Key Delegated Responsibilities** is attached.
15. A **Leadership and Governance Decision Planner** is attached to aid swift decision making.
16. This Scheme of Delegation applies to each Academy. Its effective date is noted on the first page and it will be reviewed from time to time by the Trust Board in discussion with the Diocesan Department for Education. Whilst the Scheme cannot take the form of a legally binding contract and is subject to the overriding duty on the Directors to act freely and in the best interest of the Trust, in so far as the Directors are able they agree to abide by the provisions of it and will consult the Local Governing Committees on any significant changes.
17. This Scheme of Delegation is formed of a number of component parts, effectively comprising a Trust governance and leadership handbook. By way of summary, it contains or references the following:
 - 17.1. Part 1 - This Introduction and Executive Summary: Purpose of the Scheme of Delegation;
 - 17.2. Part 2 - The Trust’s Governance Principles: Vision and Values
 - 17.3. Part 3 - Governance and Management Structure: Roles and Responsibilities
 - 17.4. Part 4 - Supervision and Intervention: Accountability
 - 17.5. Trust Structure Chart
 - 17.6. Tables of Key Delegated Responsibilities for Governance and Leadership
 - 17.7. Leadership and Governance Decision Planner

17.8. Financial Regulations Manual/Finance Policy

17.9. Committee Terms of Reference

- Finance & Resources (incorporating finance, resources, audit and risk)
- Standards (incorporating standards and intervention)
- Leadership Group
- Local Governing Committee

17.10. Director and Governor Codes of Conduct

17.11. Diocesan Memorandum of Understanding

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Introduction

In light of the significant changes affecting Catholic schools in the Diocese and nationally brought about by the Academies Act 2010, the Bishop and the Diocesan Trustees, having consulted with all Diocesan schools (both voluntary aided and academy), have set out in this Memorandum of Understanding their expectations of the schools and what might be expected of them. This is to ensure that the schools continue (irrespective of any change in status from voluntary aided to academy) to be conducted as Catholic schools in accordance with the canon law and teachings of the Roman Catholic Church and in accordance with the Trust Deed of the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle so that at all times the schools may serve as a witness to the Catholic faith in Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Changes to this Memorandum of Understanding will be made by the Bishop at any time and at his discretion. It is issued as a directive of the Bishop and as such it is binding on the schools and any multi academy trust established by the Bishop and must be complied with.

Why does the Church provide Catholic Schools?

The Church provides Catholic schools to:

- Assist in its mission of making Christ known to all people.
- Assist parents, who are the primary educators of their children, in the education and religious formation of their children.
- Be at the service of the local Church – the diocese, the parish and the Christian home.
- Be a service to society.

The vision for the education of children in Catholic schools is based on answering the fundamental question, posed by Pope Benedict XVI: “*What kind of person would you really like to be?*” Education in the Diocesan family of schools is about enabling children and young people to grow as human persons; working together, the aim is to provide a rounded education for the whole person.

Education must pay regard to the formation of the whole person, so that all may attain their eternal destiny and at the same time promote the common good of society. Children and young people are therefore to be cared for in such a way that their physical, moral and intellectual talents may develop in a harmonious manner, so that they may attain a greater sense of responsibility and the right use of freedom and be formed to take an active part in social life. (Code of Canon Law - 795)

Catholic education is inspired by a vision of life seen whole, embracing the fullness of human experience and its expression in the life of the individual, in the family, in the local community and in society at large. We are created for goodness; we want to help children and young people fulfil that promise and enrich the world as they grow from childhood to mature citizenship.

The vision of a Christ-centred community of faith finds its meaning and purpose in Jesus Christ himself, who taught that he is the ‘way, the truth and the life’.

The mission of schools is to develop a sense of truth, of what is good and beautiful. And this occurs through a rich path made up of many ingredients. True education enables us to love life and opens us to the fullness of life. (Pope Francis – Address to Italian School Teachers – 10 May 2014)

Governors, headteachers, senior leaders and all staff must reflect the image of Christ and go about their work with children, families, parishes and local communities in a manner that gives witness to the Catholic faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and Gospel values in action.

Christ is the foundation of the whole educational enterprise in a Catholic school. (The Catholic School, 1977 - 34)

Core Principles

There are some core principles that underpin our Diocesan Catholic schools.

The key areas of the distinctive nature of Catholic education are recorded in *Principles, Practices and Concerns* (Bishops' Conference 1996) and can be considered as underlying principles:

- The **search for excellence** as an integral part of the spiritual quest.
- The **uniqueness of the individual** made in God's image and loved by him.
- The **education of the whole person** based on the belief that the human and divine are inseparable.
- The **education of all** with the particular duty to care for the poor and disadvantaged.
- **Moral principles** put into practice within a Christian community.

And, the following principles recorded in '*The Common Good in Education*' (Bishops' Conference 1996) also apply:

- **Subsidiarity** – which means decisions being taken as close to the grass roots as good government allows.
- **Solidarity** – which means we are all responsible for each other, with a willingness to see others as self.

The Church also promotes the principle of **Community Cohesion**.

- Thus, Catholic schools must continue to look outwards and work in partnership with **all** other schools in the wider community, to the benefit of all children in society.

Restatement of the Purpose of the Trust and Catholic Distinctiveness

- A. The School shall be conducted in accordance with the terms of the trust of the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle.
- B. The School's admission policy must be subject to any and all statutory requirements and common law (as the same are in force from time to time) and comply with the Diocesan Authority's model policy from time to time giving priority to baptised Catholic children above others and only using the criterion of practice of the Catholic faith in cases of oversubscription by Catholics.
- C. The provision of Religious Education and Collective Worship will be undertaken in accordance with the teachings, rites and liturgical norms of the Catholic Church and will be subject to the authority and direction of the Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle.
- D. Land held by the Diocesan Trustees is used by the School at the discretion of the Bishop and must be used for purposes which are consistent with the objects of the trust.

Section A: Purpose

This Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) sets out the understandings and conditions that apply to the development and functioning of the Catholic Education Trusts (referred to by others generally as multi academy trusts or MATs but herein as the "Trust") established by the Bishop for the Diocesan

schools. It identifies the Catholic distinctiveness that must apply to the schools within each Trust and identifies the commitments that must be made to secure the success of the Trust and its constituent schools by the Trust Board, the Diocesan Trustees and the Diocesan Department for Education in providing support and having the necessary oversight of the Trusts established in the Diocese. All these organisations or bodies have a duty to operate within the guidance of the Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle and it is acknowledged that the Bishop is the primary authority for determining the membership of the respective boards of governance.

In order to exemplify the respective roles and responsibilities of various parties associated with the successful operation of the MAT a 'Responsibility, Accountability, Consultation and Information (RACI) Chart' has been drawn up and is attached as Appendix A. All parties will be expected to commit its best endeavours to make sure that those aspects within its remit and control are delivered in a complete and timely manner.

This MoU reflects the guidance issued by the Catholic Education Service with regard to the protocols that guide the relationship between the Diocese and its Schools. A copy of these protocols are available from the Diocesan Department for Education and will be provided to all Catholic senior leaders, Trust Directors and Foundation Governors when appointed to their role. The MoU will also guide the relationship of the Diocese with those schools who continue as voluntary aided schools in the expectation that they will join one of the Diocesan Trusts in due course.

Section B: Catholic Distinctiveness

Set out below are the characteristics of Catholic distinctiveness which must be evident in any school for which the relevant Trust has responsibility, which characteristics are intended to mirror those applicable to voluntary aided Catholic schools.

1. Each school in the Trust must be conducted in accordance with the principles, practices and tenets of the Catholic Church and all Catholic canon law applying thereto including the terms of the trust of the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle, so that at all times the school may serve as a witness to the Catholic faith in Our Lord Jesus Christ. The establishment of Catholic schools in the Diocese is a matter for the sole discretion of the Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle.
2. Each school in the Trust (as with all Catholic schools in the Diocese) is primarily provided for the education of persons who are baptised members of the Catholic Church and the admittance of any other persons must be made only in conformity with the respective academy's admissions policy approved by the Bishop and any direction issued by the Bishop in respect of the same.
3. Each school in the Trust must provide religious education and collective worship in accordance with the teachings, rites and liturgical norms of the Catholic Church and will be subject to the authority and direction of the Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle. The key areas of the distinctive nature of Catholic education are recorded in 'Principles, Practices and Concerns' as supplemented by 'The Common Good in Education' (Bishops Conference 1996), focusing particularly on the search for excellence as an integral part of the spiritual quest within oneself and within the wider community.
4. Each school in the Trust is part of a wider family of schools and Catholic Education Trusts in the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle, with particular emphasis on the mutual support and protection of all schools in the Diocese.

Section C: Commitments made by the Bishop and the Diocesan Trustee

Catholic Character

1. The Bishop with the Corporate Diocesan Trustee, acting through the Diocesan Department for Education, will continue to support the development of a strong Catholic ethos within schools which are part of the Trust and in the community of Catholic schools, supporting a collective voice on national issues affecting the schools and helping to communicate the schools' concerns and needs to those with the responsibility for the funding and regulation of schools.
2. The Bishop will provide guidance on the teachings of the Catholic Church in order to support the teaching of others.

Governance and Management Support

1. The Bishop will ensure that any directive issued by him will be in writing and be clearly communicated to the Chair of the Trust.
2. Recognising that education is about the formation of young people and creating an environment that enables the development of character and an approach to life in the Catholic faith, the Diocese will continue to provide support to the Trust and the schools in the pursuit of excellence and high quality education.
3. The Diocesan Department for Education will hold regular meetings of representatives of the Catholic schools in the Diocese to encourage the transfer of knowledge and the sharing of best practice. It is expected that every effort will be made to ensure representatives of the Trust and the schools attend.
4. The Bishop will seek in so far as he is able to ensure that high quality committed, skilled individuals are put forward as directors of the Trust and governors of the local governing committees established for each of the academies in the Trust. He will monitor the contribution made by such appointees and will remove individuals in the event of misconduct and/or a failure to support the high ideals of the Trust and the Bishop together.
5. The Diocesan Department for Education may ask the Trust Board for information in respect of the governance and management of the Trust and the schools for which the Trust is responsible. Where the Diocesan Department for Education becomes aware of any matter of significant concern, including any matter which might lead to the Secretary of State exercising his intervention powers, the Diocesan Department for Education will discuss the matter with the Trust Board and if appropriate the governors of the school honestly and in good faith with the aim of formulating a plan to address such concern.

Land, Buildings and Capital Expenditure

6. The land on which the schools that form part of the Trust operate is owned by the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle and as such neither the land nor the buildings constructed thereon are formally assets of the Trust. The Church Supplemental Agreement, which is put in place when each school joins the Trust, recognises the occupation and use of the school site by the Trust for the particular Catholic school as a bare licensee and that the right of the Diocese to terminate the Trust's use of the site is subject only to the giving by the Diocese of 2 years' notice. Both the Diocese and the Trust will have regard to any guidance issued by the Catholic Education Service as to the question of whether the land and buildings should be recognised as an asset on the balance sheet of the Trust.
7. The Diocesan Department for Education will not unreasonably withhold permission for the Trust/school to improve or maintain the school site.

8. In so far as the Diocesan Department for Education feels is prudent given competing requests from other schools in the Diocese, the Diocesan Department for Education will support the Trust/School in any grant application to the Secretary of State and will provide advice and support in the procurement of capital works. For the avoidance of doubt the Diocese cannot be relied on to provide any form of financial guarantees or assume any financial responsibilities in respect of such works.

Section D: Oversight by the Bishop

Role and Responsibilities of the Diocesan Department for Education

1. The Bishop has given responsibility to the Diocesan Department for Education to provide support and challenge to the Trusts. This is in recognition of the role of the Bishop as the appropriate diocesan authority in overseeing the Catholic schools in the Diocese reflected in canon law and recognised both in the Education Acts and the Church Supplemental Agreement. This role is wider than the role of the Bishop as the principal and founding Member of the Trust and is crucial to the preservation of the religious character of the schools and the fulfilment of the objects of the Trust. The Department for Education may be assisted by an education board established by the Bishop to support the Director for Education in overseeing the Trusts and in developing and sharing of best practice.
2. The Department for Education shall assist the Bishop and the Diocesan Trustee in monitoring the educational and business management performance of all Trusts in the Diocese, advising the Bishop and the Diocesan Trustee of any concerns regarding the performance of any Trust and in particular the effectiveness of the Trust's Board of Directors (the "Trust Board").
3. Specifically the Director of Education has the authority to seek from the Trust Board any information or assurance it believes necessary and appropriate (about the Trust and/or the schools for which the Trust is responsible) to undertake its role whether on a regular or random basis. The Trust Board will provide to the Director of Education regular, high-level reports regarding the educational and financial performance of the schools and any risks likely to affect the schools or the Trust as a whole to enable the Diocese to:
 - a. measure the performance of the Catholic schools across the Diocese.
 - b. identify when additional support is needed by a Trust.
 - c. facilitate the provision of support to a Trust or any of its schools whether from another Trust, another Catholic school in the Diocese or any third party agencies.
 - d. identify and share best practice across the Diocese, both in terms of school performance and the efficient and proper running of the Trust itself.
 - e. ensure that when the Trust is established the Directors of the Trust fully understand their responsibilities and together have the full range of skills and experience needed.
 - f. review on a periodic basis the skills and experience of the Trust Directors, advising the Bishop and making recommendations as may be necessary as to the appointment and in some cases replacement of those serving as Directors (both foundation directors and non foundation directors).
 - g. develop and deliver a programme of training for those who serve as Directors where it has been identified that this might best be done on a diocesan wide basis rather than within an individual Trust.
4. Where the Director of Education believes educational or business management standards within a Trust are below those that have been identified as consistent with the standards and aspirations

identified by the Bishop and the Diocesan Trustee, including as a minimum in circumstances when the Secretary of State for Education has identified serious weakness and an intention to serve a warning notice on the Trust or when a complaint has been received by the Bishop, the Director of Education will make recommendations to the Bishop as to any action that should be taken including:

- a. whether any matter needs further investigation or follow up.
- b. whether any independent review is required.
- c. whether the Bishop is advised to take direct action in relation to the Trust or any school.
- d. whether any approach needs to be made to the Secretary of State under the terms of the Church Supplemental Agreement.

Principles and specifics of the relationship between the Diocese and the Trust Board

1. Notwithstanding the high level oversight role undertaken by the Diocesan Department for Education, the relationship between the Diocese and the Trust Board should be based on one of mutual respect and appropriate question and challenge in an open and transparent manner consistent with the Catholic nature of the organisations. It is expected that both organisations will subscribe to the Seven Principles of Public Life identified by the Nolan Committee and detailed in Appendix B of this document.
2. Information provided to the Department for Education by the Trust Board will be acknowledged and the Director of Education will share any advice he or she provides to the Bishop regarding any specific matter involving the Trust with the relevant Trust Board except in so far as the Director considers any such advice should be kept confidential.
3. The Director of Education should be willing and able to provide advice and guidance to the Trust Board outside of any formal reporting regime.
4. It is recognised that good practice would be for representatives of each Trust Board, e.g. the Chair, to meet at least once annually to ensure there is both dialogue and data exchanged between them and the Diocesan Department for Education will facilitate this.
5. Any costs properly incurred by the Bishop in the exercise of his role overseeing the Trust and the schools (whether or not at the request of the Diocesan Department for Education and whether recovered on a pooled basis or as an individual contribution) will be met as an expense by the Trust, which will not be unreasonable and wherever possible will be agreed in advance.

Section E: Commitments made by the Trust Board

Catholic Character

1. The Trust Board will make sure both it and the local school governing committees maintain and develop the religious character of the schools as Catholic schools and no alteration shall be made to the religious character or conduct of the school without the consent of the Diocesan Trustee and the Bishop.
2. The Trust Board and the schools for which it is responsible will submit to the canonical inspections and visitations of the Diocese and any person appointed by the Bishop for the purpose of monitoring both the Catholic life of the Trust and its schools and the way they operate, ensuring this is in accordance with canon law and following the practices and teachings of the Catholic Church. The Trust Board and the local governing committees are expected to observe good governance and promote a high quality education, particularly in the light of the additional

responsibilities and freedoms afforded to academy trusts and the schools within their control by the State.

Governance and Management

1. The Trust Board must comply with, and must ensure processes are in place to ensure all governors and employees of the Trust comply with, all directives issued by the Bishop including this Memorandum of Understanding, giving effect to the matters addressed within it.
2. The Trust Board will adopt, in so far as they are legally able to, all policies and practices as communicated by the Diocesan Department for Education on behalf of the Bishop from time to time. Any exception to this must be agreed in writing with the Diocesan Director of Education.
3. The Trust Board should be open about decisions affecting the schools for which it is responsible and be prepared to justify those decisions except in so far as the Trust Board considers that such matter should be kept confidential. In the unlikely event of a conflict of loyalty, given the fundamental purpose for which the Trust has been established, guidance will be sought by the Bishop from the Archbishop of Westminster as head of the Catholic Church in England and Wales, with the support of the Catholic Education Service.
4. The Trust Board will, along with any local governing committees, consider on an ongoing basis the need for training and skills development as well as considering succession planning. They shall work with the Diocesan Department for Education and consider any advice or opinions of the Diocesan Director of Education with regard to leadership, governance and the standards of teaching and learning in particular. The Trust Board acknowledges the Bishop's right to appoint Foundation Directors to the Trust Board and Foundation Governors to any local governing committees. In so doing the Bishop will consider any recommendations made by the Diocesan Department for Education, particularly where there is a need to secure specific skills on to those bodies.
5. The Trust Board will not implement any proposals that affect the status or size of the Trust or its constituent schools without the written consent of the Bishop.
6. The Trust Board will be expected to adopt the Diocesan model Scheme of Delegation developed and updated from time to time dealing with the governance regime within the Trust. The Trust Board must have the express authority of the Bishop in writing to create a local governing committee for any school joining the Trust consistent with the Scheme of Delegation. Any material changes which the Trust Board wish to make to the Scheme of Delegation shall first be discussed with the Diocesan Department for Education, whose approval must be obtained where any changes impact materially on the principles of delegation, the nature of the relationship between the Trust Board and the local governing committees, the composition of the local governing committees (and the appointment of Foundation Governors by the Bishop) and the key responsibilities delegated to the local governing committees. The Diocesan Department for Education will have regard to any views of any local governing committee that is affected by a change.
7. The Trust Board and any local governing committees shall provide the Diocesan Department for Education with copies of all board/committee meetings should they be requested.
8. The Trust Board shall provide the Diocesan Department for Education with copies of any returns provided to the Education & Skills Funding Agency (or any other body set up by the Secretary of State to oversee the finances of schools).
9. The Trust Board shall provide the Diocesan Department for Education with copies of any Annual Report and the audited Annual Accounts for the Trust.

10. The Trust Board shall ensure that it has systems in place for the proper conduct and oversight of the management of the Trust and the leadership of the schools, having regard in particular to the Trust's legal responsibilities as a public and corporate body which is regulated by the Secretary of State for Education. The Trust is obliged under the Academies Financial Handbook to appoint persons who will fulfil the roles of "Accounting Officer" i.e. the "Chief Executive Officer" and "Chief Financial Officer" (as defined within the Academy Trust Handbook) and the Trust Board will consider carefully who is to fulfil these roles, ensuring that all legal requirements are satisfied and following any advice offered generally or specifically by the Director of Education, noting that it may be the case that the Chief Financial Officer role is undertaken by a Chief Operating Officer. The Trust Board is also encouraged to appoint an appropriately qualified Company Secretary or Clerk who can advise them on corporate governance and compliance.

Financial Management

1. The Trust Board has full responsibility for managing the financial affairs of the MAT including all the constituent schools. Whilst they may delegate day to day financial authority to the school's headteacher and governance oversight to the local governing committee, ultimate responsibility remains with the Trust Board. In exercising this responsibility, they are expected to fully comply with any instructions, guidance and best practice identified from time to time by the Education & Skills Funding Agency and the professional standards identified by the Accounting Standards bodies relevant to the Trust. No guarantees or assurances in respect of the financial affairs of the Trust will be provided by the Bishop or the Diocesan Trustee.
2. Whilst the overall strategic report of the Trust's activities to the Bishop (to be provided to the Diocesan Director of Education) will address financial risks, should the Trust Board identify through its own regular monitoring of the work of the local governing committees that there is likely to be the need to address financial issues not previously identified in the schools' and Trust's annual budget and/or plan then it is expected to bring these matters to the attention of the Diocesan Department for Education who will consult with the other Members of the Trust with the view to discussing with the Trust Board what action will be taken to avoid any long term threat to the Trust and the schools for which it is responsible.

Land, Buildings and Capital Expenditure

1. In addition to the responsibilities that the Trust has to the Bishop and the Diocesan Trustee in respect of the land and buildings used by the schools outlined in this Memorandum of Understanding, the Trust Board and the local governing committees will ensure that at all times any land and buildings used or occupied by the Trust (or its schools) is not used for purposes which would not be consistent with the teachings and practices of the Catholic Church and any lettings of land or buildings shall be in accordance with any policy issued from time to time by the Bishop.
2. The Trust Board will develop an estate strategy in conjunction with the LGC and in consultation with the Diocesan Department for Education that will identify the suitability of facilities on a school by school basis in the light of long term curriculum needs, estate condition and any other demands. This strategy should be appropriately reflected in the Trust business and financial plans and budgets.
3. The Trust Board will comply with and will ensure compliance by its constituent schools with the obligations of the Church Supplemental Agreement and where insurance is not in fact put in place by the Diocesan Trustee, the Trust Board will insure the school sites only with insurers approved by the Diocesan Financial Secretary on behalf of the Bishop, which may include the ESFA's "Risk Protection Arrangements" scheme. The Trust Board will obtain professional advice on the reinstatement value when such insurance is being renewed and will ensure that any insurance is

taken out or risk protection cover arranged (in joint names with the Diocesan Trustee or ensuring that full cover is extended to the Diocesan Trustee) in the full reinstatement value and will make up any shortfall from its own funds.

Admissions

The Trust Board will not determine any changes to the admissions criteria of any of its schools without the written consent of the Bishop.

Employment of Senior Staff and Key Teaching Staff

1. The Trust Board (in conjunction with the LGCs) will ensure that the Chief Executive Officer of the Trust, the headteachers and deputy headteachers for all schools, as well as any key teaching staff responsible for co-ordinating religious education and any chaplain or reserved post, shall be practicing Catholics. Any departure from this must be approved in writing in advance by the Bishop and is to be reviewed on any future appointments.
2. The Trust Board will make sure that the employment of all staff by the Trust shall be consistent with the policies from time to time notified to Catholic schools by the Bishop or the Catholic Education Service. These policies will address matters such as; pay and performance management of senior leaders, carrying out a restructure and advising generally on appropriate staffing structures and the recruitment and appointment of staff particularly senior leaders (acknowledging the Diocese's rights to be involved in and to offer advice in connection with the recruitment of the Chief Executive Officer, the Principals and any Deputy Principals). The Trust is required to adopt the CES model contracts and policies and to follow appropriate national and local agreements such as the "Burgundy Book" for teaching staff and the "Green Book" for associate staff. These local agreements will reflect the local arrangements, by local authority, the intention being to preserve and continue to mirror any such arrangements in place when the school became an academy in accordance with any commitment made at the time or subsequently.
3. The Trust will provide opportunities for staff training and formation, both at school level and at and across the Trust.

Section F: Specific Commitments made by the Schools

Catholic Character

1. The School will maintain and develop the religious character of the School as a Catholic School and no alteration shall be made to the Religious character of the School or conduct as a Catholic School without the consent of the Corporate Trustee of the Diocese and the Bishop.
2. The School will provide Religious Education in accordance with the teachings of the Catholic Church.
3. Relationships and Sex education is to be in accordance with the social and moral teachings of the Catholic Church from time to time and in consultation with parents of pupils of each School from time to time.
4. The School will provide opportunity for regular Collective Worship in accordance with the rites and tenets of the Catholic Church.
5. The inspection and reporting of Religious Education, Catholic Life and the Collective Worship at each School is to be undertaken by persons appointed by the Diocesan Authority.

6. The School will promote an authentic culture of vocation, encouraging pupils and staff to interpret their existence in the light of God's plan, with pupils developing and staff modelling an understanding of communal obligations, personal aspirations and their role as citizens in society.
7. The School will assist parents, who are the primary educators of their children, in the education and Religious formation of their children.
8. The School will work in relationship with other Catholic schools and local schools based on the call of the Gospel to serve those in need.
9. The School at all times will serve as a witness to the Catholic faith in Our Lord Jesus Christ.
10. The School will provide opportunities for staff training and formation and will ensure that staff well-being is central to what it does.

Governance

1. The School will comply with all directives issued by the Bishop and this Memorandum of Understanding has the status of directive issued by the Bishop. The School acknowledges that its authority to act is derived from the Trust's Scheme of Delegation and the School will comply with its terms.
2. The School will adopt and will comply with all school policies of the Diocese and the Bishop communicated to the School from time to time.
3. All governors of the School undertake to fulfil and observe the objects and purposes for which the School has been established.
4. All governors have a duty to act independently and not as agents of those who may have appointed them and will act with integrity, objectivity and honesty in the best interests of the School and shall be open about decisions and be prepared to justify those decisions except in so far as any matter may be considered confidential.
5. The School will review its policies and practices on a regular basis, having regard to recommendations made by Diocesan Department for Education and the CES, in order to ensure that the governance of the School is best able to adapt to the changing political and legal environment.
6. The School will consider on an ongoing basis the need for training and skills development and formation of governors as well as considering succession planning to ensure robust practices are maintained and supervised, making recommendations to the Bishop with regard to the nomination of foundation governors for his appointment. Only practicing Catholics will be appointed as foundation governors.
7. The Diocesan Department for Education will organise regular meetings for all chairs of governors to provide a briefing update on current issues and to share best practice.
8. The School will not implement any proposals for a change in status or for the expansion or contraction of the School without the written consent of the Bishop.
9. Unless the Bishop agrees in writing otherwise, governors will appoint the chair and vice chair from amongst the foundation governors.

Financial Management

1. The School acknowledges that the Bishop and Diocesan Trustee have no financial responsibility for the School in any situation.

2. The School will inform and keep the Diocesan Department for Education informed of any matter which is likely to be a cause for concern to the Diocesan Trustee and/or the Bishop (generally but not exclusively this will involve matters affecting the Catholic life of the School, matters affecting personnel, financial matters, matters affecting buildings and the School's development plan).

Buildings Maintenance and Capital Expenditure

1. The governors will ensure that at all times any land used by the School will not be used for purposes which would not be consistent with the teachings and practices of the Catholic Church and that any lettings of School premises shall be in accordance with any policy issued from time to time by the Diocese.
2. The School will financially support the work of the Diocesan Department for Education and will comply with any policy adopted from time to time regarding the pooling of capital grants e.g. any "Devolved Formula Capital" or "Standard Capital Allocation" (secured through Condition Improvement Fund).
3. The School will consult with the Diocesan Department for Education and share information about any planned significant maintenance and replacement of buildings and facilities used by the School and will not undertake any capital works to the buildings or any part of the School site without first obtaining the written consent of the Diocesan Trustee.

Admissions

1. The School will not change its admissions criteria without the consent of the Diocesan Department for Education.

Employment of the Principal and Key Teaching Staff

1. The headteacher or principal of the School as well as the deputy headteacher(s) and the head or co-ordinator of Religious Education and school chaplain shall be practicing Catholics who meet the requirements of the Diocesan Briefing Note on Practicing Catholic. When a school does not have a post designated as a deputy head teacher, the term "deputy head teacher" in the proposal above shall be held to include the most senior member of staff whose duties include deputising for the head teacher in his or her absence.
2. The School acknowledges the overarching responsibility of the Trust for staff and Governors will ensure that the School complies with the Trust's policies and practices.

Support for other Schools

1. The School is part of a family of Catholic schools both within the Trust and within the Diocese and the governors acknowledge that this means they have a responsibility which extends beyond the School.
2. The School will work collaboratively with the other Catholic schools in the Diocese sharing resources and know how as may be appropriate with the following objectives in mind, to support each other to:
 - achieve consistently high standards of learning and teaching.
 - develop cost effective curriculum design and collaboration which optimises opportunities for students and provides added value progress for them.
 - provide support building upon individual specialisms and/or areas of identified strength between the schools to improve key aspects of performance.

- achieve best value in service delivery especially where partnership working can add value.

PART 2: GOVERNANCE PRINCIPLES: VISION AND VALUES

1. Vision and Values

- 1.1. [Trust to provide statement as to the unique vision of the Trust]

2. Catholic Ecclesiology and Principles for Effective Partnership

- 2.1. The Trust is part of a family of Catholic schools that exist to further the Church's saving mission by educating its young people in accordance with the teachings of the One Teacher, Jesus Christ. In carrying out any functions on behalf of the Trust all Members, Directors and those in any way involved in the business of the Trust and the Academies recognise the Bishop of Hexham & Newcastle as the Chief Teacher and the focus of unity in the Diocese and will carry out those functions and responsibilities in full communion with him and in accord with the mind of the Catholic Church. Accordingly, the functions of the Trust and the Academies will be conducted in accordance with the following principles and observing the commitments set out in the Diocesan Memorandum of Understanding.

3. Mutual Respect and Distinctiveness

- 3.1. The Academies are equal partners within the Trust and at all times the partners will strive for consensus in decision making, recognising that each Academy has both strengths and weaknesses. Each Academy is unique and serves its community. The Trust will seek to preserve and protect each Academy's distinctiveness and will be respectful of each Academy's respective ethos and mission. The Academies will work collaboratively with each other, sharing resources, knowledge and best practice, to fulfil the Trust's mission, vision and values.

4. Transparency

- 4.1. All those involved in the running and oversight of the Trust and the Academies will be open and honest in their dealings with each other, at all times acting in good faith and recognising the value of independence and separation in relation to decision making.

5. Subsidiary and Earned Autonomy

- 5.1. Decisions are to be taken at the level nearest to those affected by those decisions which is compatible with the principles of solidarity and support for the common good, avoiding unnecessary bureaucracy and aiming in so far as possible to make changes to established practices only where it can be demonstrated there is a reasonable need and in order to learn from experience or adapt to changing circumstances. The Trust adopts a policy of earned autonomy and where governance responsibility is delegated appropriate decision making authority will be given. The parameters of such authority will be clear and those to whom responsibility is given will be required to report to those who retain overall responsibility and accountability.

6. Solidarity

- 6.1. All those with responsibility for the Trust and the Academies share a particular commitment to the mutual support of all Academies for whom the Trust is responsible, especially those that are in need of assistance at any particular time. It is acknowledged that smaller schools, particularly in rural areas, can be financially vulnerable putting at risk continuity of Catholic education in an area and as a consequence the Trust's policies will prioritise funding support to those schools, either by levying reduced charges for centralised services or weighting resource support in favour of smaller schools.

7. The Common Good

- 7.1. All recognise their responsibility towards the common good, not just of the Academies for whom the Trust is responsible and the wider Diocesan family of schools, but of all of the families and communities in the areas served by the Trust. The Directors will ensure that common action and collaboration is conducted at the correct level and that the balance between subsidiarity and solidarity serves the common good in the most appropriate way.

PART 3: GOVERNANCE & MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Overall Structure

- 1.1. The nature of the Trust as a company running multiple Academies means there are many governance and management layers.
- 1.2. The “**Members**” of the Trust are equivalent to shareholders of a trading company but as the Trust is charitable with no power to distribute profit to shareholders, the Members are best viewed as guardians of the constitution, changing the Articles if necessary and ensuring the charitable object is fulfilled. Each Member’s liability is limited to £10.
- 1.3. The Bishop, through the Diocesan Department for Education, will also exercise oversight and supervision as diocesan authority and the Diocesan Memorandum of Understanding seeks to articulate this. Each of the Members, Directors and Governors are required to observe any directions issued by the Bishop and to follow any advice and guidance issued by the Diocesan Department for Education on behalf of the Bishop.
- 1.4. This Scheme of Delegation is consistent with and incorporates the principles of delegation within a Catholic multi academy trust as advised by the **Catholic Education Service** and reflected in the CES model protocols which have been adopted by the Diocese and which guide the relationship of Catholic schools with their diocese. It accords with the **Memorandum of Understanding** put in place between the Secretary of State for Education and the Catholic Church.
- 1.5. Decision making and accountability rests with the “**Directors**”, who are Directors for charity law purposes and company directors registered with Companies House. The Directors are personally responsible for the actions of the Trust and the Academies and are accountable to the Members, the Secretary of State for Education and the wider community for the quality of education and the expenditure of public money. The Directors are required to have systems in place through which they can assure themselves of the quality, safety and good practice of the affairs of the Trust. The Directors meet as a board of Directors (the “**Trust Board**”).
- 1.6. The Directors delegate aspects of governance and the day to day oversight of school leadership to a “Local Governing Committee” (referred to as the “**Local Governing Committee**”).
- 1.7. Other committees established by the Trust Board may be tasked with fulfilling particular functions or advising the Directors on strategic matters.
- 1.8. To encourage collaboration and develop local leadership capacity particularly with the view to improving and sustaining standards of teaching and learning and deciding strategic vision, a “**Leadership Group**” has been formed comprising the Academy Headteachers and those with executive responsibilities within the Trust. Some decision making responsibility may be delegated directly to the Leadership Group or otherwise to the Headteachers by the Trust Board or the respective Local Governing Committee.
- 1.9. A diagram setting out the Trust’s governance structure and a summary of how key decisions are made (the “**Leadership and Governance Decision Planner**”) are attached.

2. Role of Members

- 2.1. The Members are the guardians of the constitution, determining the governance structure of the Trust and providing oversight and challenge of the Directors to ensure the charitable object of the Trust is being fulfilled and a Catholic education is provided. In view of the overarching role of the Members, the Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle will be a Member and will appoint other Members from within the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle.
- 2.2. The Members' key responsibilities are:
 - 2.2.1. to secure Catholic education and ensure the Trust remains true to its vision and values;
 - 2.2.2. to ensure the charitable objects of the Trust are met;
 - 2.2.3. to determine the Trust's constitution i.e. the Articles and approve of the governance structure; and
 - 2.2.4. to support the Bishop in appointing and removing Directors.

3. Role of Directors

- 3.1. The Directors have overall responsibility and ultimate decision making authority for all the work of the Trust, including the establishing and maintaining of the Academies (which includes taking existing schools into the Trust and opening new schools). The Directors have the power to direct change where required.
- 3.2. There are no "terms of reference" for the Trust Board as the detail for the organisation of meetings of the Directors is set out in the Articles of Association. These determine meeting frequency, quorum and the appointment of a chair and vice chair. For ease of reference, the Trust Board is required to meet at least 3 times a year and quorum for any meeting is the greater of 3 and a third of the Directors appointed at any one time.
- 3.3. A summary of the key responsibilities of the Directors is set out in the attached **Table of Key Delegated Responsibilities**.
- 3.4. All Directors must comply with the **Director Code of Conduct** adopted by the Trust from time to time which, for ease of reference, is appended to this Scheme of Delegation.

4. Role of Governors

- 4.1. The role of a Governor within the Trust is an important one. In developing a governance structure, the Trust has sought to ensure that as much as possible the responsibility to govern is vested in those closest to the impact of decision making and that such responsibility matches the capacity of those assuming responsibility. The Trust Board has established Local Governing Committees for each of the Academies (or in groups where Academies are working closely together), for the most part made up of individuals drawn from the Academy's community, both as elected and appointed members.
- 4.2. Those serving on the Local Governing Committee are accountable to the Directors and the Bishop and must ensure that at all times they act in good faith and in the best interests of the Academies and the Trust, exercising reasonable care and skill having particular regard to personal knowledge and experience.
- 4.3. The Directors will work with the Diocese, having regard to any recommendations by the Diocesan Department for Education, in making or facilitating the making of suitable

appointments of Governors and where removal is deemed in the best interest of the Trust and the Academy.

- 4.4. As a matter of general principle, the Local Governing Committee will adopt and will comply with all policies adopted by the Trust Board and will comply with any direction issued by the Trust Board and have regard to any advice given.
- 4.5. A summary of the key responsibilities of the Governors is set out in the attached **Table of Key Delegated Responsibilities**.
- 4.6. For the purposes of contracting with third parties, the Local Governing Committee has authority to act to fulfil its responsibilities and make the decisions it is authorised to make as set out in the Leadership and Governance Decision Planner and the Trust's Financial Regulations Manual or Finance Policy (which will be compliant with the Education & Skills Funding Agency's **Academy Trust Handbook**).
- 4.7. All Governors must comply with the **Governor Code of Conduct** adopted by the Trust from time to time which, for ease of reference, is appended to this Scheme of Delegation.
- 4.8. Terms of Reference regulating the composition of the Local Governing Committee and how it conducts business are also appended to this Scheme.

5. Committees and Further Delegation

- 5.1. Terms of Reference for the other committees established by the Directors, including the Leadership Group, are appended to this Scheme of Delegation.
- 5.2. The Local Governing Committees are not expected to establish any sub-committees. The Local Governing Committee is encouraged to form working groups to deliver specific projects if required, whether in conjunction with the Trust Board or alone, and subject to any guidance offered by the Trust Board from time to time.
- 5.3. Those to whom delegated responsibility is given must acknowledge the limitations on their authority and must not act outside of their authority. Any willful disregard of the matters expressed in this Scheme and in particular the relevant Terms of Reference is likely to lead to a removal of delegated authority.
- 5.4. In the event of any serious disagreement between the Trust Board and a Local Governing Committee which cannot be resolved by the Chair of the Local Governing Committee discussing the matter with the Chair of the Trust Board will be referred to the Diocesan Department for Education for guidance.
- 5.5. No alteration of the Articles or change to the Scheme or removal of delegated authority shall invalidate any prior act of the Local Governing Committee (or other committee) which would have been valid if that alteration or withdrawal had not been made.
- 5.6. As a matter of general principle, the Local Governing Committee and the Academy more generally will adopt and will comply with all policies adopted by the Trust Board and will comply with any direction issued by the Trust Board and have regard to any advice given.

6. Executive Team

- 6.1. As a non-executive body, the Trust Board must rely on others to fulfil the executive or management functions of the Trust. For the most part, this responsibility will fall on the Headteachers of the Academies, supported by the school leadership teams. Certain functions relating to the leadership and management of the Trust itself or which relate to the activities

of more than one Academy will be undertaken by an “**Executive Team**”, led by the “**Chief Executive Officer**” (the senior executive leader in the Trust) and supported by either or both the “**Chief Operating Officer**” (a senior officer with general operational responsibility) and the “**Chief Financial Officer**” (a senior officer with overall responsibility for the Trust’s financial systems and procedures).

- 6.2. The Chief Executive Officer will be the “**Accounting Officer**” for the Trust, responsible to Parliament and to the Education & Skills Funding Agency’s accounting officer for the financial resources under the Trust’s control and to assuring Parliament of high standards of probity in the management of public funds, particularly regularity, propriety and value for money.
- 6.3. The need for and size of the Executive Team will be determined by the Trust Board, in consultation with the Leadership Group, reflecting the degree of collaboration across the Trust. Where possible, resources will be drawn from the Academies themselves rather than the use of external consultants or through recruitment.
- 6.4. The cost of the functions undertaken by the Executive Team or actions at the request of the Trust Board are generally funded on a fair and equal basis by the Academies by the contribution of a percentage of the central government funding provided for each Academy. This contribution will be set each year against a budget for the shared costs approved by the Trust Board in consultation with the Leadership Group and may vary according to the level of activities undertaken and costed on a menu type basis. Variations may also reflect any financial vulnerability from time to time, especially in relation to smaller schools.
- 6.5. A summary of key leadership responsibilities is set out in the attached Table of Key Delegated Responsibilities.

7. Financial Delegation

- 7.1. The Trust’s financial procedures and authorisations are set out in the “**Financial Regulations Manual**” or “**Finance Policy**”, a copy of which is appended to this Scheme of Delegation. Except as provided for in this Scheme of Delegation and subject to the requirements and restrictions set out in the Financial Regulations Manual/Finance Policy, budget responsibility is delegated to the respective Academy and expenditure will be authorised by the Trust and monitored by the Local Governing Committee.
- 7.2. No Trust or Academy monies (whether or not authority to expend has been devolved to the Local Governing Committee) shall be paid into any bank account other than a bank account authorised by the Trust’s Chief Financial Officer.
- 7.3. The Trust is required to have in place systems to identify and properly manage risk. The Local Governing Committee is expected to comply with any policy or guidance issued by the Trust (and the Secretary of State for Education as Principal Regulator) and to ensure that proper procedures are put in place for the safeguarding of funds, including any voluntary funds or charitable funds obtained through fund raising activities.
- 7.4. The Local Governing Committee is expected to report to the Trust Board on the management of the funds which are its responsibility and will notify the Trust Board (or as directed) as soon as reasonably practicable of the occurrence of any event or happening of any circumstance which might expose the Trust or the Academy to any loss or claim, including but not limited to any event which might be covered by the ESFA’s **Risk Protection Arrangement** scheme.
- 7.5. The Trust Board will have regard to the interests of all the Academies in deciding and implementing any policy (including any reserves or contingency policy) or exercising any authority in respect of any one or all of the Academies for which it is responsible.

Notwithstanding this, the priority for the Trust Board is to put in place measures to ensure that any of the Academies are supported when the need arises and remain financially viable. Where this may have a significant financial impact on the funding of the support provided by or on behalf of the Trust Board, any policy shall first be discussed with the Leadership Group and its views taken into account and considered in relation to the setting and implementation of any such policy.

8. Personnel

- 8.1. All staff employed by the Trust or in connection with any Academy or Academies are employees of the Trust.
- 8.2. The Trust is required to adopt and ensure the consistent implementation of a series of HR policies and practices, which are expected to mirror those issued from time to time by the Catholic Education Service. The responsibility for the appointment and performance management of staff is set out in the relevant Table of Key Delegated Responsibilities and the Leadership and Governance Decision Planner.
- 8.3. Any proposed changes to the staffing structure operated within an Academy must be approved first by the Trust Board, who may also require changes to be made, but who will consult first with the Local Governing Committee before consulting more widely on any proposal.
- 8.4. Whilst the management of any claims and disputes involving staff (other than senior leaders) are expected to be dealt with at the local level in accordance with the Trust's Disciplinary Policy, the Trust Board should be kept informed and any advice or guidance issued by or on behalf of the Trust Board should be followed.
- 8.5. The Trust Board (in conjunction with the Local Governing Committees) will ensure that the Chief Executive Officer for the MAT, the Headteachers and Deputy Headteachers for all Academies, as well as any key teaching staff responsible for co-ordinating religious education and any chaplain or reserved post, shall be practicing Catholics. The Diocesan Department for Education must be consulted on any appointment and if any investigation into wrongdoing is to be carried out.

9. Premises

- 9.1. The day to day maintenance and care of the buildings and facilities used in respect of the Academy is the responsibility of the Local Governing Committee (with management responsibility being delegated to the Headteacher), who shall have regard at all times to the safety of the users of the buildings and the facilities and the legal responsibilities of the Trust (and/or any others) as owner of such buildings and facilities.
- 9.2. The Trust is required to have and to keep under review a long term estate management strategy that will identify the suitability of buildings and facilities in light of anticipated curriculum needs and projected pupil numbers. The Local Governing Committee will advise the Trust Board of the need for and availability of any capital investment and will work with the Trust Board to agree any capital priorities and the delivery of any significant capital project.
- 9.3. No disposal or acquisition of land will be undertaken without the consent of the Trust Board. Temporary use and short term lettings will be managed by the Local Governing Committee, subject to any lettings policy issued by the Trust from time to time and observing any regulations issued by the Diocese.

10.Regulatory Matters

- 10.1. The responsibility to ensure that the Academy complies with all legal obligations and operates in accordance with any statutory guidance and any guidance issued by the Diocese is a shared responsibility of the Directors and the Governors, as well as leadership.
- 10.2. The Local Governing Committee has authority to determine any appeals against admission and any decision by the Headteacher to exclude any pupil.

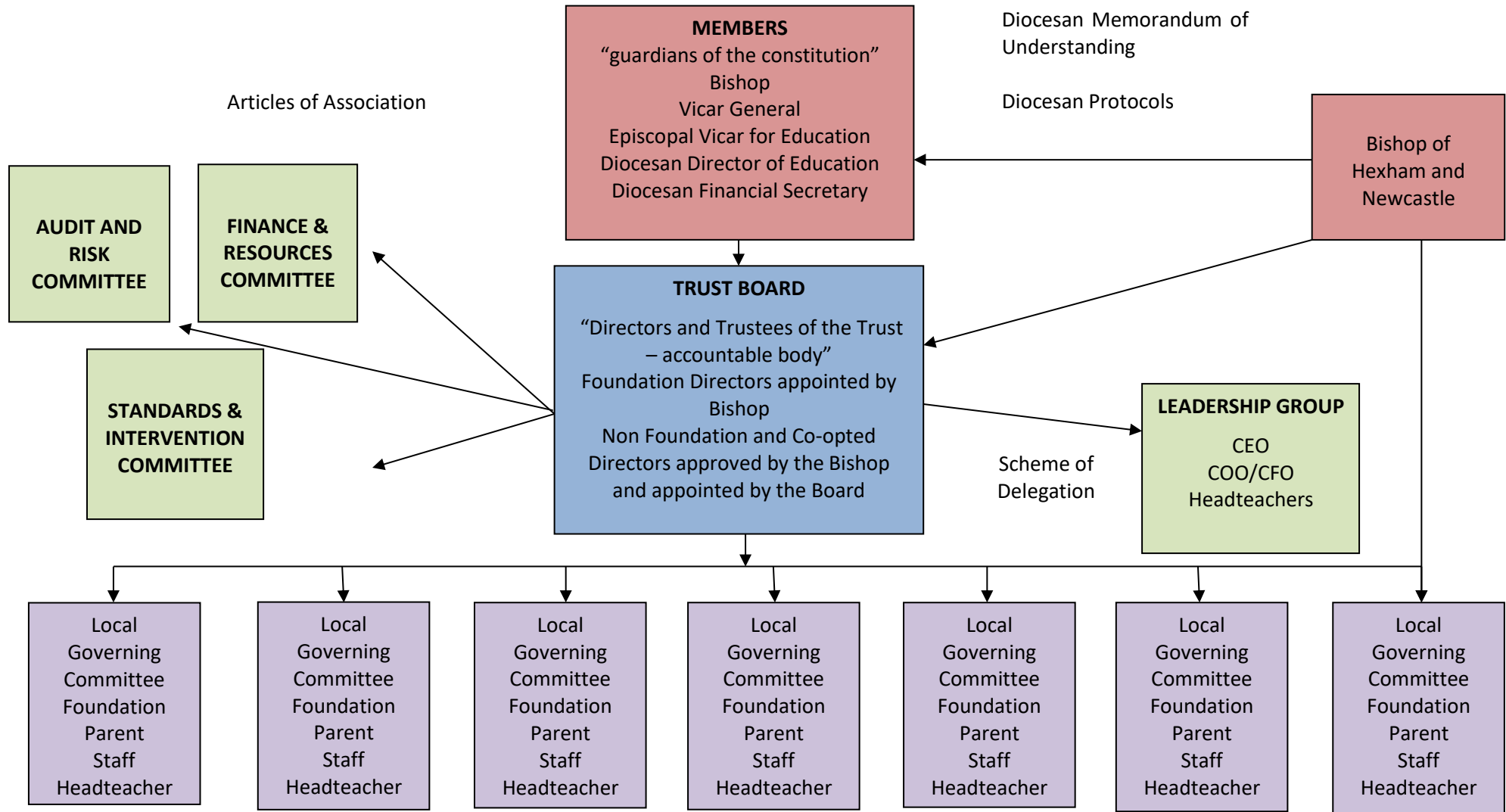
PART 4: SUPERVISION AND INTERVENTION: ACCOUNTABILITY

1. Notwithstanding the level of delegated responsibility to the Local Governing Committee and leadership, the Directors remain legally responsible and accountable for all matters in connection with the Academies and they are required to have systems in place through which they can assure themselves of quality, safety and good practice in the Academies.
2. Underpinning this accountability is a requirement for transparency and openness both in terms of the communication of expectations and the reporting of activities and outcomes. It is the responsibility of all to ensure this is achieved, with reporting taking such format as the Trust Board and the Local Governing Committee shall agree from time to time.
3. As well as the legal or financial implications of any failure or wrongdoing, the reputational damage to the Trust and its Academies, as well as the Bishop and the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle, is a significant risk and concern.
4. As the day to day responsibility for the running of the Academy is delegated to the Local Governing Committee (such responsibility being managed in practice by the Headteacher), the Directors are removed from the operational risks and thus require the Academy to notify them (or as directed) of the following:
 - 4.1. any event leading to loss of life or critical injury on the premises of the Academy or during an event off the premises organised or supervised by Academy staff;
 - 4.2. any sexual or violent or illegal act against a child committed by any person while on the Academy premises under any circumstances;
 - 4.3. the suspension or summary dismissal of any senior member of staff;
 - 4.4. any event that requires a report to the Health and Safety Executive or that results in the service of a legal notice on the Academy alleging a breach of fire or health or safety law or regulations;
 - 4.5. any event that requires a formal hearing by a panel of representatives of the Academy or that results in the service of a legal notice on the Academy alleging a breach of employment law or regulations;
 - 4.6. notification of any OFSTED inspection;
 - 4.7. any suspected breach of the Academy Trust Handbook or communication received from the Education & Skills Funding Agency seeking to investigate any complaint made in relation to the Academy.
5. Appropriate steps will then be taken to manage any situation, communicating as appropriate in the circumstances (having regard to the fundamental principle of transparency and openness).
6. The Local Governing Committee acknowledges the need for and submits to any inspection by the Directors, the Executive Team and the Diocesan Department for Education.

7. Where weaknesses are identified, either as a consequence of a fall in standards, a failure of governance and/or leadership or where there is any financial wrongdoing, the Trust Board expressly reserves the unfettered right to review or remove any (or indeed all) power or responsibility conferred on the Local Governing Committee under this Scheme of Delegation.
8. The Trust's Leadership and Governance Decision Planner indicates relevant decision making authority which may be temporarily removed from an Academy which is being formally supported by the Trust. Decisions as to whether an Academy is "effective" or to be formally "supported" (beyond the support which the Trust would normally provide or secure for its Academies) will be made by the Trust Board, who will have regard to any advice issued by the Executive Team and the Diocesan Department for Education.
9. If the Directors resolve to suspend all delegated authority to a Local Governing Committee, an executive or management board will be established to undertake the responsibilities of the Local Governing Committee until such time as delegated authority can be restored. Any decision to do so and any appointments to the executive or management board will be that of the Trust Board, who shall seek the advice and support of the Members (and in particular the Diocesan Department for Education) if any external concerns are raised.
10. Notwithstanding the above, the Trust Board and the Local Governing Committee acknowledge the value of maintaining a good working relationship particularly in light of the levels of delegated responsibility within the Trust and the impact this may have on the ability of the Trust Board or the Local Governing Committee to react when standards are falling and/or there is evidence of financial imprudence exposing the Academy or the Trust to a threat of intervention. The Trust Board and the Local Governing Committee in such circumstances make the following commitments to each other:
 - 10.1. to discuss openly any weaknesses or any situation which may in the opinion of either potentially lead to a threat of intervention by the Secretary of State for Education as the Principal Regulator;
 - 10.2. to use all reasonable endeavours to agree the measures to be taken to improve standards and the performance of the Academy and to support each other in the implementation of those measures, including involving the Diocesan Department for Education who will support and advise on steps to be taken and facilitate additional support if needed;
 - 10.3. to allow each other the opportunity to effect improvements at the Academy provided such steps do not seek to undermine the collaborative and respectful approach being adopted by each;
11. The Trust Board shall not exercise any power to suspend or remove the Headteacher without first discussing with the Chair of the Local Governing Committee the need to ensure that such power is being exercised appropriately and proportionately.

Trust Structure Chart

CATHOLIC EDUCATION TRUST – GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE



Summary of Delegated Governance Responsibility

DIOCESE OF HEXHAM AND NEWCASTLE: [NAME OF TRUST] - SUMMARY OF KEY DELEGATED GOVERNANCE RESPONSIBILITIES

Members	Directors/Trust Board	Local Governing Committee
- determine constitution and religious character - oversee the Directors - recognise any strategic partnerships - delegate governance and management responsibility to the Directors (formally appointing and removing the Directors where necessary)	- hold governance accountability - determine strategic vision and overarching strategic plan - provide strategic leadership and governance - provide challenge and support to senior leaders - undertake the recruitment and performance of any chief executive officer - develop and decide strategic and operational policies - facilitate collaboration - co-ordinate and oversee shared services and resources - develop and oversee the implementation of Trust development plan - approve of performance benchmarks - approve overall Trust budget and approve School budget parameters - monitor expenditure in accordance with appropriate authorisations - oversee financial governance and risk management - determine the Trust's reserves/contingency policy - ensure appropriate insurance or risk cover is put in place - undertake recruitment of headteachers and facilitate the performance management of senior leaders - develop shared staff training programmes and opportunities for professional development - support the development and building of leadership and governance capacity at School level - approve of site and asset management strategy - oversee any significant capital expenditure and building projects ensuring compliance with Trust finance policy - approve of all funding applications - decision maker for all appeals	- decide the School's strategic vision and uphold the School's distinctiveness and unique character, in harmony with the Trust's strategic vision and ethos - support senior leadership team generally and with specific emphasis on target setting, pupil monitoring and analysing progress data to inform curriculum & budgeting priorities - approve of School development/action plan - recommend of School budget and support the head teacher in submitting the budget to the Trust Board for formal approval - approve any significant capital expenditure - oversee expenditure ensuring the School works within its budget and implements the Trust's risk and financial management policies ensuring probity, prudence and efficiency - play an active part in the recruitment of the headteacher - support the senior leadership team in the development and review of an appropriate staffing structure - support the head teacher in the recruitment and performance management of personnel - responsible for staff welfare and well-being, supporting the senior leadership team in monitoring absence and sickness - promote collaboration with other schools in the Trust - develop and review delegated school policies (e.g. admissions, pupil behaviour, safeguarding) - provide advice and feedback to the Directors, ensuring the School is meeting the needs of its community - undertake all and any appropriate community consultation - provide a point of contact for parents, carers and other members of the local community, maintaining an effective link to the wider community - evaluate its performance ensuring appropriate training and development so that knowledge, skills and behaviour are appropriate for a dynamic education environment

Summary of Delegated Leadership Responsibility

DIOCESE OF HEXHAM AND NEWCASTLE: BWCET - SUMMARY OF KEY DELEGATED LEADERSHIP RESPONSIBILITIES

Chief Executive Officer/Accounting Officer	Chief Operating Officer/Chief Financial Officer	Headteacher
- Trust Accounting Officer - provides leadership and vision to the Trust chairs [Leadership Group] and provides focal point for reporting to the Trust Board - represents views of [Leadership Group] and supports implementation of strategic decisions by Trust Board - advises on operational priorities and leads on development of Trust strategic plan and Trust policies, which remain the responsibility of the Trust Board [in conjunction with the relevant Chair of the Local Governing Committee,] carries out the performance management of head teachers and supports their professional development - manages Trust executive team ensuring high quality effective support is provided to Trust schools - responsible for ensuring that the Trust keeps proper financial records, has appropriate financial systems in place and manages opportunities and risk - submits annual "statement on regularity, propriety and compliance" to ESFA - manages Trust's external relations - builds effective partnerships with external agencies including the Regional Schools Commissioner and the Education & Skills Funding Agency - leads and manages any process for the expansion of the Trust and its schools	- responsible for all operational matters - fulfils responsibilities of "chief financial officer" under the Academy Trust Handbook - supports the Trust CEO in managing operations and responsible for delivery of the Trust's financial and accounting processes - ensures there is sound and appropriate financial governance and that risk management arrangements are in place - develops and ensures the implementation of the Trust's financial management regulations and/or finance policy - prepares and monitors Trust and school budgets - ensures delivery of annual accounts - advises on financial policies including a procurement policy and strategy - leads on any significant procurement and advises on and monitors less significant procurements in line with the Trust procurement policy - undertakes contract management of any Trust wide contract and supports school based teams to manage school contracts - develops and advises on operational support for the head teachers - ensures there is risk protection cover in place for all risk areas - leads on any significant capital project including managing any application for capital funding and/or distribution of any capital grant	- undertakes statutory responsibilities as head teacher - provides leadership and vision to the School - responsible for standards and pupil outcomes - determines the curriculum priorities and takes responsibility for all teaching and learning - implements Board decisions affecting the School - advises on and implements School's development/action plan and agreed strategic priorities - advises on and implements the staffing structure approved by the Local Governing Committee for the School and is responsible for the organisation of resources - responsible for recruitment of School staff and their professional development - undertakes performance management of School staff and deals with any grievances - responsible for disciplining School staff - working with the COO/CFO, advises on the School budget making recommendations to the Local Governing Committee and ensuring the School manages within its budget - advises on School policies, which are delegated to the Local Governing Committee for determination - responsible for safeguarding and well-being of pupils and staff - decides any pupil exclusions - manages School's relationship with its community

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE DECISION PLANNER

This decision planner is designed to work in conjunction with the formal Scheme of Delegation adopted by the Trust. It provides a quick reference guide to how some of the important decisions within the Trust are to be made. Any discrepancies between this document and the Scheme of Delegation shall be construed in favour of the Scheme of Delegation, which will take precedence. Further detail of the involvement of the Bishop, the Diocese of Hexham of Newcastle and the Diocesan Department for Education is contained in the **Diocesan Memorandum of Understanding**.

The different levels of delegated power are listed below but it should be noted that not every task requires all levels of delegated power to be defined:

- Approve (App)
- Propose (Pro)
- Develop (Dev)
- Monitor (Mon)
- Consulted (Con)
- Implement (Imp)

The governance and management layers within the Trust are identified as follows:

1. Trust Members (the “**Members**”)
2. Trust Board of Directors (the “**Board**”)
3. Local Governing Committee (the “**LGC**”)
4. Trust Chief Executive Officer (or assigned member of the Executive Team) (“**CEO**”)
5. Headteacher/Head of School (“**HT**”)

	Task	Members	Board	LGC		CEO	HT
				Effective Academy	Supported Academy		
1.	Governance and Vision						
1.1.	Approve any changes to Trust Articles of Association	App	Pro				
1.2.	Approve any changes to Trust Scheme of Delegation	App	App/Pro	Imp	Imp	Dev/Pro	Imp
1.3.	Establish or merge Local Governing Committees	Con	App/Pro			Pro	Con
1.4.	Establish Trust Committees and determine terms of reference		App			Pro	
1.5.	Establish LGC for admissions and appeals		App	Con	Con	Pro	Imp
1.6.	Establish LGC for pupil exclusions		App	Con	Con	Pro	Imp
1.7.	Establish LGC Working Groups		App	Con	Con	Pro	Imp
1.8.	Establish LGC for Pay Review		App	Pro	Pro	Pro	
1.9.	Appoint Chair of Trust Board	App/Imp	Pro				
1.10.	Remove Chair of Trust Board	App/Imp	Pro				
1.11.	Appoint Foundation Directors	App/Imp	Pro/Con				
1.12.	Remove Foundation Directors	App/Imp	Pro				
1.13.	Appoint Co-opted and Non-Foundation Directors	App/Imp	App/Imp				
1.14.	Remove Co-opted and Non-Foundation Directors	App/Imp	Pro				
1.15.	Appoint Chair of LGC	Mon	Con/App	Pro	Con	Con	

	Task	Members	Board	LGC		CEO	HT
				Effective Academy	Supported Academy		
1.16.	Remove Chair of LGC	Mon	App/Pro	Con	Con	Con	
1.17.	Appoint Foundation Governors	App/Imp	Con	Pro	Pro	Con	Pro
1.18.	Appoint Non-Foundation Governors (other than elected Governors)	App	App	Pro/Imp	Pro/Imp		
1.19.	Remove Foundation Governors	App/Imp	Pro/Con			Con	Con
1.20.	Remove Non-Foundation Governors and Elected Governors	Mon	Pro/App	Pro	Con	Con	Con
1.21.	Appoint (and remove) Clerk to Trust Board		App			Pro	
1.22.	Appoint (and remove) Clerk to LGC		Pro/Mon	Con	Con	Pro	
1.23.	Director skills audit and governance reviews	Mon	App			Pro/Imp	
1.24.	Governor skills audit	Mon	App	Con	Con	Pro/Imp	Imp
1.25.	Approve Directors/Governor Expenses Policy		App			Pro/Imp	
1.26.	Manage Conflicts of Interest		App	Imp	Imp	Pro/Imp	Pro
2.	Finance						
2.1.	Trust & Academy Financial Regulations and Procedures		App	Imp	Imp	Dev/Pro/Imp	Con/Imp
2.2.	Appoint Trust auditors	App	Pro/App			Pro/Imp	
2.3.	Approve Trust Budget		App			Dev/Pro	Con
2.4.	Trust Annual Accounts	Mon	App			Pro/Imp	

	Task	Members	Board	LGC		CEO	HT
				Effective Academy	Supported Academy		
2.5.	Directors Annual Report	Mon	App			Pro/Imp	Con
2.6.	Undertake financial efficiency review (across the Trust)		App			Dev/Imp	Con
2.7.	Undertake financial efficiency review (within the Academy)		App	Mon	Mon	Con/Pro	Imp
2.8.	Compile and review Trust Risk Register	Mon	App			Imp	Con
2.9.	Compile and review Academy Audit and Risk Register and report on risks to Trust Audit and Risk s Committee		Mon/App	App	Con	Mon	Pro/Imp
2.10.	Trust Academies Accounts Returns to ESFA		App			Imp	Imp
2.11.	Response to Auditor's Management Letter	Mon	App/Imp			Imp/Mon	
2.12.	Academy Budget Plan		App/Mon	Pro/Mon	Pro/Mon	Pro/Imp	Con/Mon/Imp
2.13.	Monitor budget		App/Mon	Pro/Mon	Pro/Mon	Pro/Imp	Con/Mon/Imp
2.14.	Academy Accounts Return to ESFA		Mon/App	Con	Con	Imp	Con
3.	Strategy, Performance and Expansion						
3.1.	Trust Strategic Plan	Mon	App	Con	Con	Dev/Pro	Con/Imp/Dev
3.2.	New, converter or sponsored academies joining MAT	App	App/Pro			Pro/Imp	Con
3.3.	Academy expansion and/or change in age	App	App	Con	Con	Pro/Imp	Con/Imp
3.4.	Determine overall effectiveness of Academy		App	Mon	Mon	Pro	Con/Pro
3.5.	Academy Performance Targets		Mon/App	Con/Pro/Mon	Con/Pro/Mon	Pro/Imp	Con/Pro

	Task	Members	Board	LGC		CEO	HT
				Effective Academy	Supported Academy		
3.6.	Academy Development Plan		Mon/App	App	Con	Pro/Con	Pro/Imp
3.7.	Academy Action Plan/School Improvement Plan		Mon/App	App	Con	Pro/Con	Pro/Imp
3.8.	Intervention/Establish Executive/Management Board	Mon	App			Pro/Imp	Con
3.9.	Admissions Policy		Mon	App	App	Con	Pro/Imp
3.10.	EYFS Policy		Mon	App	App	Con	Pro/Imp
3.11.	EYFS Plan & Quality of Provision		Mon	App	App	Con	Pro/Imp
3.12.	SEN Policy		Mon	App	App	Con	Pro/Imp
3.13.	SEN Plan & Quality of Provision		Mon	App	App	Con	Pro/Imp
3.14.	Teaching & Learning Policy		Mon	App	App	Con	Pro/Imp
3.15.	Curriculum Policy		Mon	App	App	Con	Pro/Imp
3.16.	Sex Education policy	App	Mon	App	App	Con	Pro/Imp
3.17.	Religious Education policy	App	Mon	App	App	Con	Pro/Imp
4.	Staffing						
4.1.	Determine Trust executive staff structure and grades	Mon	App			Pro/Imp	
4.2.	Determine Academy staff structure and grades		Mon	Con/Pro	Con	Pro/App	Pro/Imp
4.3.	CEO appointment	Con	App/Pro/Imp				
4.4.	Executive Team appointments	Mon/Con	App			Pro/Imp	

	Task	Members	Board	LGC		CEO	HT
				Effective Academy	Supported Academy		
4.5.	Academy Executive Headteacher/Headteacher/Head of School appointments	Con	App/Imp	Con	Con	Pro	
4.6.	Academy Deputy Headteacher appointments	Mon	App/Imp	Pro	Con	Pro	Con
4.7.	Academy teaching and support staff appointments		Mon	Imp	Imp		Pro/Imp
4.8.	All reserved posts	Con	Mon	Imp	Imp	Con	Pro/Imp
4.9.	Performance management of CEO	Con/Mon	Imp				
4.10.	Performance Management of Executive Headteacher/Headteacher	Mon	Mon	Mon	Mon	Imp/App	Imp
4.11.	Suspension of CEO	Con	App				
4.12.	Suspension - Executive Team/Executive Headteacher/Headteacher	Con	App	Con	Con	Pro	
4.13.	Dismissal of CEO	Con	App				
4.14.	Performance Management of Head of School		Mon	Mon	Mon	Mon	Imp
4.15.	Performance Management of SLT		Mon	Mon	Mon	Mon	App/Imp
4.16.	Suspension of Head of School	Con	App	Con	Con	Mon	Pro
4.17.	Dismissal of Head of School	Con	App	Con	Con	Mon	Pro
4.18.	Suspension and dismissal of other teaching and support staff		App	Pro/Imp	Con	Con	Pro/Imp
4.19.	Redundancy of staff		Mon/App	Con	Con	Mon	Pro
4.20.	Restructuring of staff		Mon/App	Pro/Imp	Con	Mon	Pro

	Task	Members	Board	LGC		CEO	HT
				Effective Academy	Supported Academy		
5.	Land and Contracts						
5.1.	Asset Management Strategy and insurance		App	Con	Con	Pro/Imp	Con
5.2.	Health & Safety and related safeguarding		App	Con	Con	Pro/Imp	Con
5.3.	Condition Surveys		App	Con	Con	Pro/Imp	Pro
5.4.	Expansion and Redevelopment Works	Mon	App	Con	Con	Pro/Imp	Pro
5.5.	Leases	Con/App	App/Pro	Con	Con	Pro/Imp	Pro
5.6.	Lettings and shared use		Mon	Mon	Mon	App/Con	Pro/Imp
5.7.	Strategic support and shared services		Mon	Con	Con	App/Imp	Pro/Imp
6.	HR and Policies						
6.1.	Pay & Remuneration Policy		App	Con	Con	Pro/Imp	Imp
6.2.	Safeguarding Policy and Review		App	Con	Con	Pro/Imp	Con
6.3.	Job Role Salary & Grading Policy		App	Con	Con	Pro/Imp	Imp
6.4.	Changes to Employee Terms & Conditions or Collective Agreements		App	Con	Con	Pro/Imp	Imp
6.5.	Performance Management & Appraisal Review Policy		App	Con	Con	Pro/Imp	Imp
6.6.	Disciplinary Policy		App	Con	Con	Pro/Imp	Imp
6.7.	Grievance Policy		App	Con	Con	Pro/Imp	Imp
6.8.	Capability Policy		App	Con	Con	Pro/Imp	Imp

	Task	Members	Board	LGC		CEO	HT
				Effective Academy	Supported Academy		
6.9.	Whistleblowing Policy		App	Con	Con	Imp/Pro	Imp
6.10.	Re-structuring & Redundancy Policy		App	Con	Con	Imp/Pro	Imp
6.11.	Employee Health & Safety Policy		App	Con	Con	Imp/Pro	Imp
6.12.	Terms and holidays	Pro/Mon	App/Imp			Con	Con
6.13.	Academy times	Mon	App/Imp	Pro	Pro	Con	Pro
6.14.	Adoption and review of Non-HR Statutory Policies		App	Con	Con	Pro/Imp	Pro/Imp
6.15.	Exclusions		Mon	Mon/App	Mon/App	Mon	Pro/Imp
6.16.	Appeals against Permanent Exclusion		Mon	Imp	Imp		
6.17.	Complaints		Mon	Imp/Mon	Imp/Mon	Imp/Mon	Imp

FINANCIAL REGULATIONS MANUAL

1. Core Diocesan Principles

There are core principles that underpin all schools within the Hexham and Newcastle Diocese.

The key areas of the distinctive nature of Catholic education are recorded in Principles, Practices and Concerns (Bishops' Conference 1996) and can be considered as underlying principles:

- The search for excellence as an integral part of the spiritual quest.
- The uniqueness of the individual made in God's image and loved by him.
- The education of the whole person based on the belief that the human and divine are inseparable.
- The education of all with the particular duty to care for the poor and disadvantaged.
- Moral principles put into practice within a Christian community.

And, the following principles recorded in 'The Common Good in Education' (Bishops' Conference 1996) also apply:

- Subsidiarity – which means decisions being taken as close to the grass roots as good government allows.
- Solidarity – which means we are all responsible for each other, with a willingness to see others as self.

The Church also promotes the principle of Community Cohesion.

- Thus, Catholic schools must continue to look outwards and work in partnership with all other schools in the wider community, to the benefit of all children in society.

1. Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to ensure [Trust] maintains and develops systems of financial control which conform with the requirements both of propriety and of good financial management. It is essential that these systems operate properly to meet the requirements of our funding agreement with the Department for Education (DfE) and the requirement of the Memorandum of Understanding with the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle.

The **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** sets out the understandings and conditions that apply to the development and functioning of the Catholic Education Trusts (referred to generally by others as Multi Academy Trusts or MATs) established by the Bishop for the Diocesan schools. The MoU makes clear that the Trust Board has full responsibility for managing the financial affairs of the Trust including all the constituent schools. No guarantees or assurances in respect of the financial affairs of the Trust will be provided by the Bishop or the Diocesan Trustee.

The Trust must comply with the principles of financial control outlined in the academies guidance published by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), primarily the Academy Trust Handbook (ATH). This policy expands on that and provides detailed information on the Trust's accounting procedures and systems.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the associated Trust policies and with individual academy operational procedure notes. Academy operational procedure notes are an important

supplement to this policy and will be agreed by the Trust and will be distributed to all relevant central and academy staff.

- Scheme of Delegation
- Assets and Disposals Policy
- Anti-Fraud & Corruption Policy
- Charging, Remissions & Lettings Policy
- Code of Conduct - Directors/Governors
- Code of Conduct – Employees
- Code of Conduct – Local Governing Committees
- Budget monitoring and reserves Policy
- Treasury Management & Investment Policy
- Risk Management Policy
- Business Continuity Plan
- Whistleblowing Policy

2. Principles

The Trust will manage its affairs in accordance with the high standards detailed in the ‘Guidance on Codes of Practice for Board Members of Public Bodies’ and in line with Lord Nolan’s 7 principles of public life –

Selflessness

Holders of public office should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest.

Integrity

Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might influence them in their performance or their official duties.

Objectivity

In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merits.

Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

Openness

Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interests clearly demands.

Honesty

Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interests.

Leadership

Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

3. Organisation and Responsibilities

Role of Members

The Members of the Trust oversee the Board of Directors (the “Trust Board”), holding the Directors to account and ensuring that the values and ethos of the Trust are upheld, and the distinctiveness of the Academies is preserved. Their functions include:

- Appointing Trustees
- Removing Members and Trustees, under certain circumstances
- Receiving the annual accounts
- Overseeing the achievement of the objectives of the Trust
- Amending the Articles of Association, subject to restrictions
- Approving the Trust Auditors

Role of Trust Board

The Trust Board has overall responsibility for the administration of the Trust’s finances. The Trust Board is responsible for managing the financial affairs to ensure regularity, propriety and value for money, and for ensuring that the Trust’s funds are used in accordance with charity law, company law and the funding agreement. The Directors are held to account by the Members and the Secretary of State, although the Trust Board delegates certain powers to the Accounting Officer/Chief Executive Officer.

Role of Finance & Resources Committee

Finance and Resources Committee operates in accordance with its Terms of Reference under the Scheme of Delegation

The functions of the Finance and Resources Committee include:

- Oversight of Trust finance concerning the Trust and its Academies, the overall Trust budget and those of the individual Academies, the management of funds against the budget, the benchmarking of financial performance, expenditure levels, budget headings and the way funds are utilised (including value for money) and the way monies are secured.
- To monitor the production, timeliness and accuracy of key financial statements in response to both statutory and local requirements.
- To support (recommending and advising) the Trust Board in developing and then implementing a reserves policy and to consider the impact of strain in individual Academy budgets.

- To support (recommending and advising) the Trust Board in developing and then implementing the Financial Regulations Manual and associated procurement policy
- To review tenders for major contracts as specified in the Financial Regulations Manual. To approve or reject tender proposals or, where required, make recommendations to the Trust Board.
- To recommend any changes in the Financial Policy, where significant, to the Trust Board. To review the operations of the Trust and the Academies in relation to the procedures shown in the Finance Policy.
- To monitor the estates management of the Trust.
- To monitor key financial and accounting systems and reviewing any audits of these or the general finances of the Trust and make recommendations to the Trust Board and/or the Local Governing Committees as appropriate.

Role of Audit Committee

The Audit Committee operates in accordance with its Terms of Reference under the Scheme of Delegation.

The functions of the Audit Committee include:

- Advise and report to the Directors in relation to any organisational risks which might impede the development and implementation of a long-term strategy for the success of the Trust.
- Support the Directors in the formulation of audit and risk management policies for the Trust and the Academies for achieving the aims and objectives set out in the Trust's Development Plan or long-term strategic vision.
- Advise the Directors on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Trust's systems of internal control and its arrangements for risk management, control and governance processes and securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness (value for money).
- Review any financial and risk report submitted to the Academies and advising the Directors on any issues arising from it as well as making recommendations for future reports to sustain the integrity of the financial and risk management systems.
- Advise the Directors on the appointment, reappointment, dismissal and remuneration of auditors (both external auditors and internal audit).
- Agree the work programme of internal audit including the checking of financial controls, systems, transactions and risks.
- Consider the reports of the auditors and, when appropriate, advise the Directors and the Academies of material control issues and monitor the implementation of agreed audit recommendations.
- Advise on policies for the securing of the funds and assets of the Trust including by the prevention of loss through fraud and irregularity.
- Ensure that all allegations of fraud and irregularity are appropriately investigated and control weaknesses addressed, working with the Directors and the Headteachers of the Academies, as appropriate.
- Recommend the annual financial statements to the Directors for approval.

Role of Accounting Officer

The Trust's Chief Executive (CEO) holds the position of Accounting Officer. The Accounting Officer has personal responsibility (that cannot be delegated) for assuring the Trust Board that there is compliance with the ATH, the Funding Agreement and all relevant aspects of company and charitable law. The role of Accounting Officer includes a personal responsibility to Parliament, and to the ESFA's Accounting Officer, for the financial resources under the Trust's control.

The Accounting Officer must:

- Assure the Trust Board that there is compliance with the ATH, the Funding Agreement and all relevant aspects of company and charitable law.
- Ensure that bank accounts, financial systems and financial records are operated effectively with segregated and separation of duties.
- Ensure that all the Trust's property is under the control of the Directors, and that measures are in place to prevent losses or misuse, including maintenance of adequate fixed asset registers.
- Keep full and accurate accounting records.

Role of Chief Operating Officer (COO) and Chief Financial Officer (CFO)

The ATH states that all academies are required to appoint a "chief financial officer". This function may be undertaken by any Chief Operating Officer or by a dedicated Chief Financial Officer, who will report to the COO. Where there is no COO, the CFO will report directly to the CEO. The COO/CFO plays both a management and leadership role in the Trust.

The main CFO responsibilities are:

- the establishment and operation of a suitable accounting system.
- the management of the Trust's financial position at a strategic and operational level within the framework for financial control determined by the Trust Board.
- meeting all external reporting deadlines.
- implementation and operation of rigorous and robust audits and control.
- ensuring that the annual accounts are properly presented and adequately supported by the underlying records of the Trust.

The CFO does not discharge all of their responsibilities personally and is supported by a Central Finance team to whom specific functions may be delegated.

Role of Central Finance team

The Central Finance team functions include but are not limited to:

- Prepare management accounts on a monthly basis and complete the following reconciliations
- Bank reconciliations
- Payroll and employer/employee deductions accounts
- Sales control account
- Purchases control account
- Childcare voucher account
- VAT accounting and returns
- Preparation of annual financial statements

- Generation of Bacs payment runs for creditor payments
- Maintenance of FMS system including chart of accounts, fixed asset accounting and creditors master file
- Journal transactions relating to cash and virements
- Monthly review of creditors and debtors accounts
- Treasury Management

The Central Finance team will lead on all non-academy specific finance matters including central Trust functions, teaching school, trading companies etc.

Role of Headteachers

The Headteachers at each academy have the following financial responsibilities:

- Ensuring expenditure is controlled within approved budgets.
- Ensuring staffing structures are both affordable and within the authorised established Scheme of Delegation.
- Enforcing the application of policies and procedures within each academy
- Ensuring the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) is provided with any financial information requested in a timely manner and is also notified immediately of any situation likely to significantly impact on the financial position of the academy
- Where delegated authorising contracts, orders and virements up to the amounts delegated in these procedures
- In conjunction with Central Finance Support staff ensuring that all transactions are correctly authorised and approved and that a full audit trail exists that complies with these regulations
- Ensuring timely returns to the Central Finance Team are accurate and within deadlines.

Role of Local Governing Committees (LGCs)

The Trust's Scheme of Delegation will provide each Local Governing Committee with their delegated authorities.

Role of Internal Assurance

The Trust has determined that this function will be undertaken by the appointment of an internal assurance provider. A programme of checks for Internal Assurance will be agreed and approved by the Audit Committee. The programme will be based on an assessment of risk across the Trust and will address all key financial transactions and systems.

The CFO may also direct the Trust's Central Finance team and auditors to undertake unannounced spot checks on a periodic basis at the Trust's academies to provide additional assurance that these procedures are being complied with.

Role of Academy Support Staff

Support staff at each academy will work in close collaboration with the Central Finance team.

Their main responsibilities may include:

- Cash collection and banking.

- Order and invoice and debtor account administration.
- Providing all financial information required by the Central Finance team to complete a monthly bank account reconciliation and produce management accounts.
- Management and monitoring of the individual academy payment cards.
- The maintenance of inventories in line with limits set out in these financial procedures.
- Payroll processing/checking.
- Notification to the Central Finance team of any staffing changes/leavers/starters/amendments.

Detailed **Operating Procedures** are in place in each Trust for each academy for all the above procedures. Procedures will not be amended without the approval of the CFO.

Role of Budget Holders

Headteachers may delegate non-staffing budgets as appropriate. Delegated budget holders are responsible for monitoring and managing their budget effectively.

Any potential overspends against the budget must be approved in advance with the Trust.

All staff

All staff are responsible for the security of the Trust's property, for avoiding loss or damage, for ensuring economy and efficiency in the use of resources.

Register of Interests and Related Parties

It is important for anyone involved in spending public money to demonstrate that they do not benefit personally from the decisions they make. To avoid any misunderstanding that might arise, all members, directors, leadership team and staff with significant financial or spending powers are required to declare any financial interests they have in companies or individuals from whom the Trust may purchase goods or services. Close family relationships within the Trust are also declared as per the ATH requirements. The register is open to public inspection and published on the website.

It is the role of the Clerk to the Board of Directors to ensure the Register of Business Interests is up to date and that all meeting agendas have a declaration of interests' item at the start of every meeting. Registers will be open to public inspection and published on the Trust's website.

An up-to-date copy of the register will be held by the Trust and published online as required by the ATH.

The existence of a register of business interests does not, of course, detract from the duties of Directors and staff to declare interests whenever they are relevant to matters being discussed at committee and is a standard item on every agenda. Where an interest has been declared, Directors and staff should not attend that part of any committee or other meeting.

Related Party transactions will only be entered within the restrictions of the ATH and the not-for-profit requirements.

All related party transactions must be approved in advance of entering any contract or commitment by the Trust Board. The Trust Board will verify the arrangement meets the restrictions and will notify/seek approval from the ESFA as required.

The ESFA must be notified in advance of all transactions with related parties as per stated in the handbook Gifts, Hospitality & Inappropriate Expenditure

Codes of Conduct for both staff (Appendix C) and Directors and governors (included in the Scheme of Delegation) define the procedures to be followed whenever offers of gifts and hospitality are received. See **Gifts and Hospitality Policy**.

4. Financial Planning and Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP)

The Central Finance team will prepare both an annual budget and medium-term financial plan for the Trust overall and will work with individual Academies in preparing their own annual budgets. These plans are prepared to inform the Trust's strategic development planning processes for the next 3 years. The Trust's Strategic Plan identifies the development plan priorities over the medium term and the expected level of resources available to meet these and any other cost pressures.

Annual budgets should reflect the priorities in each Academy's School Improvement Plan (SIP). SIPs should include cost estimates, both capital and revenue, associated with the achievement of each objective, including success criteria against which achievement can be measured. The Trust must be fully involved in the development of such plans.

5. Developing and Approving the Annual Budget

The Trust Board must approve a balanced budget for the forthcoming financial year and must minute this approval.

The budget process follows an annual planning cycle. A timetable for budget setting will be established by the Trust in advance of each year's process and will ensure that the budget information is ready for submission to the ESFA by the required deadlines.

The annual budget will reflect the best estimate of the resources available to the Trust for the forthcoming year and will detail how those resources will be utilised establishing clear links to support objectives identified in the School Improvement Plans for each Academy.

Please refer to the Trust's **Budget Forecast Monitoring and Reserves Policy** for more detail in this area.

If there is any doubt that a balanced budget cannot be maintained/set, the CFO/COO/CEO/Board must discuss immediately and make appropriate plans to take action to ensure this can be achieved. Consideration of the action plan to be given by the Trust Board for discussion and eventual ratification.

6. Financial Management - Monitoring & Reporting

The Trust will ensure that monthly management accounts are promptly prepared setting out the Trust's financial performance and position, comprising budget variance reports and cash flow forecasts with sufficient information to manage cash, debtors and creditors. These reports will be prepared at an individual academy level and at a consolidated Trust level.

Management accounts will be shared each month as per the ATH. The Trust Board must consider these when it meets. The Trust Board **must** ensure appropriate action is being taken to maintain financial viability including addressing variances between the budget and actual income and expenditure.

Management accounts for each academy will be shared with headteachers regularly and individual budget-holder reporting is shared as appropriate.

The CFO will ensure budget monitoring reports are prepared monthly together with a year-end outturn projection on at least a termly basis. These reports will contain key performance indicator reporting.

7. Financial Accounting System

The Trust uses the Trusts Accounting System and all financial transactions must be recorded using this system. Access rights are defined by the CFO for each user with a unique ID and password. Authorisation and supervisory controls, alongside segregation of duties of the Central Finance team will be adequate to ensure transactions are properly recorded and authorised and that errors are identified and rectified without delay.

It is the responsibility of the Trust team to maintain the integrity of the system parameters, master-files and chart of accounts.

8. HR Establishment Controls and Payroll

Staff Appointments and Contractual Changes

Any changes to the staffing structure of the Trust may only be approved in line with the Trust's **Scheme of Delegation**.

Working together with the academy and Payroll provider, the Central Finance team staff are responsible for ensuring that the staff database on the budget planning software reconciles to the current budget.

Payroll Administration

The Trust's payroll processing is administered through a contractual arrangement with an external payroll provider.

Academy **Operating Procedures** detail the controls in place to ensure that the payroll is correctly processed each month and ensure that:

- only valid and authorised amendments are submitted and processed.
- starters and leavers are correctly processed.
- checks are completed to verify the overall payroll before payments are made.
- separation of duties exists at all stages.
- evidence of all checks completed is retained.

The payroll system automatically calculates the deductions due from salaries to comply with current legislation. The payroll provider is authorised to make BACS payments from the Trust's Bank Account by direct payment for the amounts due in statutory and voluntary deductions.

Payments to individuals and IR35

The Trust will operate the following rules when engaging any "off payroll" staff:

Senior employees will always be paid through the payroll in order for the Trust to ensure that tax obligations are fully met and not open to question.

All workers, including consultants and those operating through personal service companies, and self-employed basis who are not on the Trust's payroll must be passed to the central team to determine the correct treatment.

The central team will review each case and complete the government's Employment Status Indicator tool (ESI).

The results of the test will be printed off, reviewed and signed by the Trust, who will ensure that the correct employment status is implemented.

Any anomalies must be discussed with the Central Finance Team prior to engaging that individuals services.

Special staff severance payments

Non-contractual payments at the end of employment would only be paid if the Trust has concluded that the payment represented the best value for money compared to other options. The business case for such payments would be fully documented and the guidance issued by the ESFA will be followed.

The Accounting Officer/CEO in conjunction with the Trust Chair shall be informed of any proposal to make a non-contractual payment up to £50,000 and may stipulate that their consent is obtained before any payment is made; the calculation of payments will be verified by the CFO to ensure compliance with the AFH.

Trusts must obtain prior approval for staff severance payments of £100k or more which include a non-statutory/non-contractual element, and/or where the employee earns over £150k.

Mileage Payments to Staff

Mileage will be approved and paid in accordance with the Trust's **Travel and Expenses Policy**.

9. Competitive Purchasing Requirements and Limits

The Trust will aim to achieve best value for money for all its purchases ensuring that services are delivered in the most economical, efficient and effective way, within available resources, and with independent validation of performance achieved wherever practicable.

The Trust will aim to achieve best value in all its purchasing ensuring that products and services are procured and delivered in the most economical, efficient and effective way.

The Trust will utilise an appropriate and proportional competitive process to demonstrate best value, ensuring both cost and quality criteria are considered for the life of the contract. For items and/or services that are continuously procured, for example energy or office supplies, life-time should cover 4 years requirements. (The value of purchases is calculated as the value, excluding VAT, for the full duration of the contract including any extensions or options).

For all purchasing needs the Trust will ensure a fair, transparent and open process is utilised, ensuring the founding principles of public procurement are understood and followed, shown below:

- Equal Treatment of Suppliers
- Full Transparency throughout the process
- Proportional process in relation to the value of the purchase
- Mutual recognition for standards and specifications

The Trust recognise that many of the products and / or services used at an individual school level will be the same. To ensure financial and public contract compliance the Trust will consider aggregated

purchasing requirements and ensure compliance with statutory and published thresholds. This will also ensure the Trust maximises its size and scale to ensure best value, remove duplication of effort and drive operational and process efficiency. Key processes to ensure full stakeholder engagement at school levels will be implemented.

In purchasing all goods and services, budget holders should ensure that they review the use of existing resources in conjunction with the Trust and build a clear understanding of requirements covering product and/or service specification and then consider the cost, quality, reliability, availability and ongoing support.

To ensure appropriate independence, segregation of duties and public probity it is important that declarations of interests and actual or perceived connections with existing and/or potential providers are considered and documented at the start of any commercial process.

Orders up to £10,000

In purchasing all goods and services, budget holders should ensure that they review the use of existing resources and consider the cost, quality, reliability and availability. Fixed prices, in writing, should be obtained for all purchases before orders are placed. Value for money should be demonstrated. Individual Headteachers may approve an order up to this limit, with CFO as second approver.

Orders over £10,000 but less than £50,000

A clear specification of requirements should be defined, covering both cost and quality criteria and then a minimum of three written quotations should be obtained for all purchases between £10,000 and £50,000, in conjunction with the Trust. Existing public sector frameworks and/or market places should be considered where possible. Written details of quotations obtained should be retained and attached to the order placed and available for audit purposes. Telephone quotations are not acceptable. Individual Headteachers may approve an order between the specified amount, with CFO and CEO as additional signatories.

Orders over £50,000 but less than £100,000

The CFO must be consulted before the procurement process begins.

A specification of requirements and evaluation criteria will be drawn up in advance. All potential contractors invited to submit quotations shall be provided in all instances with identical information and instructions. Quotes will be evaluated by more than one individual and approved by the CFO and Finance and Resources Committee.

Orders over £100,000 but less than EU Thresholds

All goods/services ordered with a value over £100,000, or for a series of contracts which in total exceed £100,000 must be subject to formal tendering procedures, detailed below, and will be managed by the CFO. Approval obtained and the CEO and Orders must also be approved the Finance and Resources Committee/Board prior to proceeding with successful tenderer.

EU Procurement Thresholds 1st Jan 2020

Supplies and Services

All sectors £378,660

Works

All sectors £4,733,252

Small lots

Supplies and Services £70,778

Works £884,720

Procurement above EU Thresholds must be carried out in accordance with the appropriate EU Procurement Directives, which the UK enforces through the Public Contract Regulations 2015.

In the first instance the **National Deals** signposted by the ESFA and existing EU compliant framework agreements established by public sector buying organisations, including the Church Marketplace when appropriate, will be explored and will be used where appropriate. When a framework is not a suitable option legal advice on the procedure is likely to be necessary.

For purchases above the threshold a procurement plan identifying the key tasks, responsibilities and authorisation routes must be approved by the Board of Trustees before the procurement commences and progress will be monitored and reported to Trustees throughout the process. Where this is a procurement that is not from an existing framework this process is likely to draw on external procurement, technical and legal advice.

References

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/transposing-eu-procurement-directives>

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2015/102/contents/made>

10. Tendering Procedures (below EU Thresholds)

Tenders within a PSBO framework will follow the framework guidance.

Staff will refer to and follow the additional DfE guidance

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/buying-for-schools>

There are two main forms of tender procedure: open and restricted and the circumstances in which each procedure should be used are described below. The Trust must seek tenders on the most appropriate basis.

Open Tender: This is where all potential suppliers are invited to tender. The budget holder must discuss and agree with the Director of Corporate Services how best to advertise for suppliers e.g. general press, trade journals or to identify all potential suppliers and contact directly if practical.

Restricted Tender: The Trust will normally invite at least four bidders. This is where suppliers are specifically invited to tender. Restricted tenders are appropriate where there is a need to maintain a balance between the contract value and administrative costs.

Preparation for Tender

Full consideration should be given to: objective of project; overall requirements; technical skills required; after sales service requirements; form of contract terms and conditions

The award criteria which are to be applied in evaluating tenders must be recorded in writing before the tenders are invited and must be stated in the documents sent to suppliers. It may be useful after all requirements have been established to rank requirements (e.g. mandatory, desirable and additional) and award marks to suppliers on fulfilment of these requirements to help reach an overall decision.

Invitation to Tender

If a restricted tender is to be used then an invitation to tender must be issued. If an open tender is used an invitation to tender may be issued in response to an initial enquiry.

An invitation to tender will normally be issued to at least four suppliers, and may include the following:

- scope and objectives of the project.
- technical requirements.
- selection criteria.
- implementation of the project.
- terms and conditions of tender and form of response.
- Technical/Suitability and qualifications of the contractor.
- Relevant experience of the contractor.
- Certificates of quality/conformity with standards.
- Quality control procedures.
- Details of previous sales and references from past customers.

Financial status of supplier. Suppliers in financial difficulty may have problems completing contracts and in the provision of after sales service. It may be appropriate to commission a credit report.

Tender Acceptance Procedures

The invitation to tender should state the date and time by which the completed tender document should be received by the Trust. Tenders should be submitted in plain envelopes clearly marked to indicate they contain tender documents. The envelopes should be time and date stamped on receipt and stored in a secure place prior to tender opening. Tenders received after the submission deadline should not normally be accepted, unless the CFO and Trust Chair are satisfied that the tender was posted or dispatched on time but that delivery was prevented by an event beyond the control of the tenderer and that other tenders have not been opened.

Tender Opening Procedures

All tenders submitted should be opened at the same time and the tender details should be recorded. Tenders should be opened in the presence of the CFO (or other designated officer).

A record should be established to record the names of the firms submitting tenders and the amount tendered. This record must be signed by both people present at the tender opening.

Tendering Evaluation Procedures

The evaluation process should involve at least two people. Those involved should disclose all interests, business and otherwise, that might impact upon their objectivity. If there is a potential conflict of interest then that person must withdraw from the tendering process.

Full records should be kept of all criteria used for evaluation for contracts over £ and a report should be prepared for the Finance and Resources Committee highlighting the relevant issues and recommending a decision.

Exemption from Trust Tendering Requirements

(applies to purchases under EU threshold only)

These procedure do not apply to the following types of expenditure:

- Exam fees
- Payroll transactions
- School trips and other purchases where the Trust is acting as an agent processing funds received on the behalf of others.
- Risk Protection Arrangement
- Any Diocesan levy or contribution to Diocesan costs

Instances of all other types purchases that do not comply with the competitive purchasing requirements, for reasons such as sole supplier, specialist services etc. will require documenting and reporting for approval through the appropriate route depending on the value of the contract.

11. Delegated Responsibility levels for approval of expenditure

The following limits apply to budgeted spend only and subject to the competitive purchasing requirements above.

- Headteachers and CFO – up to £10,000.
- Headteachers, CEO and CFO - over £10,000 less than £30,000
- CEO and COO/CFO and Finance and Resources Committee - Over £30,000 less than £75,000.
- Finance and Resources Committee/Trust Board above £75,000

EXEMPTION FROM TRUST TENDERING PROCEDURES REQUEST

The Trust needs the power to waive the requirement of its internal tendering procedures in certain circumstances. No exemptions can be used if the estimated value of the goods or services exceeds OJEU thresholds.

An exemption from the Trust's requirements allows a contract to be placed by direct negotiation with one or more suppliers. All exemptions, and the reasons for them, must be recorded using the appropriate form. Exemptions shall be signed by the Accounting Officer, Chief Operating Officer and the Chair of the Trust's Finance & Resources Committee.

The following lists the details that allow exemptions:

- Any contract or sub contract that is substantially for the undertaking of services in which the exercise of specialist professional knowledge and skill is of primary importance and where such professional knowledge and skills is only available from a single provider, or a limited range of suppliers.
- For work, supplies and services which are patented or of a proprietary or special character and for which it is not possible or desirable to obtain competitive prices.
- Where for technical, commercial or artistic reasons or because of exclusive rights, it is not reasonable to advertise for tenders.

- The Chief Operating Officer must be consulted where the contract is an extension to an existing contract and a change of supplier would cause:
 - Disproportionate technical difficulties
 - Additional costs
 - Significant disruption to the delivery of Academy operations
- Where an exemption is necessary because of an unforeseeable emergency involving immediate risk to persons, property or serious disruption to academy operations, the Accounting Officer or Chief Operating Officer may approve the exemption but must prepare a report for the next Trust Finance & Resources meeting to support the action taken.

The Chief Operating Officer must monitor the use of all exemptions and therefore all forms should initially be sent to this post holder. The signature sign off on the form details the order in which the list should be signed and approved.

12. Signing of Contracts

Depending on the value of the contract, legal advice should be sought as appropriate. When a tender is accepted and a contract is entered into on behalf of the Trust only the officers as nominated in **Scheme of Delegation** at have the authority to sign a legally binding contract or agreement on the Trust's behalf.

Register of Contracts

The Central Finance team will maintain a **contracts register** which is to be updated on a continuous basis. This will aid with the planning and delivery of procurement decisions and obtaining value for money.

The process for raising requisitions and orders, receiving goods and paying invoices is detailed in the Academy **Operating Procedures**. Procedures ensure:

- Requisitions and orders are raised in all but exceptional circumstances.
- Invoice are only paid if matched with orders and GRNs.
- Invoices are valid and arithmetically correct.
- Invoices are coded correctly.
- Authorised in line with delegated limits.
- Suppliers are added to the register accordingly.

13. Payments

Manual cheques may be used by the Central Finance Team only in exceptional circumstances and made under the rules and regulations set out elsewhere in this manual. The only cheque books within the Trust are held by the Central Finance team. All bank accounts must have dual authorisation and at least three cheques signatories. All amendments to signatories must be approved by the CFO.

Direct Debits may be set up in certain circumstances, subject to the advance approval of the CFO.

BACS and direct transfer payments – See Trusts operating procedures.

14. Other Purchasing

Petty Cash

Petty Cash imprests will only be issued in exceptional circumstances and must be approved by the Central Finance Team and petty cash must only be used and controlled strictly within the instructions in the **Trusts Operating Procedures**.

Purchasing Cards

Purchasing cards have been issued for the purposes paying for goods and services when the normal ordering processes are not possible.

The issuing of all purchasing cards will be subject to prior approval of the CFO and register of cardholders will be maintained by the Central team.

Each Cardholder will sign a **cardholder user agreement** and is responsible for following these guidelines.

Card statements will be promptly checked and reconciled to receipts by Central Staff. Statements will then be subject to appropriate authorisation by a more senior officer (the card of the CEO will be authorised by the CFO/Chair of Board).

15. Income

The main source of income for the Trust are the grants from the ESFA. The receipt of these funds is monitored by the Central Finance team who are responsible for ensuring all grants due to the Trust are collected.

Other Grants

Prior to any grant/funding bids being prepared and submitted to any funder, the grant should be discussed with the CFO and Central Finance team who will support and co-ordinate the bid and grant bids across the Trust and this will be notified to the Finance and Resources Committee.

Approved grants need to be built into budget assumptions and budgets loaded in terms of both income and expenditure. The grant control file should be retained by Central Finance team with copies of the initial bid, the offer letter and the terms and conditions that need to be complied with.

Other Income collected by the Trust

The Trust collects income from parents or the public for:

- School Transport
- School Meals
- Trips and residential visits
- Book bags & Uniform
- Nursery Places
- Breakfast & After School Club fees
- Lettings

The Trust may also receive donations from parents and other members or organisations within the community. The Trust also may obtain additional grant funding from the ESFA/DfE/OFSTED to fund the following operational supporting activities:

- Teaching School Alliance
- NLE Grant income
- DfE Hub or MAT growth funding
- School Improvement
- OFSTED inspection income

The Trust may also set up separate legal entities/Trading Arms in order to generate additional funding for the benefit of the Trust. The funding will be 'gifted back' to the Trust.

Operating Procedures in each Academy provide detailed instructions regarding the receipt, reconciliation and banking of each income stream. The procedures ensure that all income is adequately controlled and safeguarded and Headteachers and the CFO will ensure that there is a clear segregation of duties to prevent one individual being able to undertake a complete transaction in isolation.

16. Bank Reconciliations

Each bank account is reconciled on at least a monthly basis in line with Operating Procedures.

Bank reconciliations will be completed and documented by the Central Finance team and then reviewed and approved by the trust financial representative.

Debtors and liabilities

Debt Recovery

Delegated Limits for write-off

Headteachers up to £50 in relation to pupil debt only

The LGC must approve all commercial debt write-offs and pupil debt above £50. Any debt over £500 must be approved by the Trust.

The Trust may perform the following financial transactions up to the limits set out below:

- writing off debts and losses, including any uncollected fines; and
- entering into guarantees, indemnities or letters of comfort, excluding those relating to borrowing by the trust.

At times, due to unforeseen circumstances, significant debts may occur. Please see the ATH for details.

Limits:

- Up to £45,000 per single transaction.
- cumulatively, 1% of total annual income in any one financial year per category of transaction for any academy trusts that have not submitted timely, unqualified financial returns for the previous two financial years. This category includes new academies that have not had the opportunity to produce two years of financial statements; and
- cumulatively, 5% of total annual income in any one financial year per category of transaction for any academy trusts that have submitted timely, unqualified financial returns for the previous two financial years.

Beyond these limits the Trust must seek and obtain explicit and prior approval of the Secretary of State, through the ESFA, for the transaction.

17. Treasury Management

Trust Banking Arrangements

The Trust has appointed Lloyds Bank Plc as their bankers for all current banking needs. The opening of all bank accounts must be authorised by the Trust's Finance & Resources Committee.

Cash Flow Forecasts

The Central Finance team is responsible for preparing monthly cash flow forecasts to ensure that the Trust has sufficient funds available to cover day-to-day operations and where possible allow the investment of surplus funds in line with the Trust's **Treasury Management & Investment Policy**

Borrowing

In line with funding agreements, the Trust must seek ESFA's prior approval for borrowing (including finance leases and overdraft facilities) from any source, where such borrowing is to be repaid from grant monies or secured on assets funded by grant monies, and regardless of the interest rate chargeable. It is noted however that it is unlikely that such approval will be given. Purchasing cards must only be used for business (not personal) expenditure, and balances cleared before interest accrues.

Any transaction that may involve a form of borrowing or delayed repayment must be reviewed and approved by the Trust Board.

Refer to individual Operating Procedures.

Leasing

There are two types of lease:

- Operating leases - these do not represent borrowing
- Finance leases: these are a form of borrowing and the Trust must obtain ESFA's prior approval before they are entered into. It is unlikely that such approval will be given.

Academies must seek approval from the CFO before entering any form of lease agreement. The consent of the Diocesan Trustees is needed before any land/building lease agreement can be entered into.

Fixed Assets

The treatment of Fixed Assets is detailed in the Trust's Assets & Disposals Policy and each Academy within the Trust must retain their list of assets. This will be used to provide an overarching asset register within the Trust.

Academy trusts must seek and obtain prior written approval from the Secretary of State, via the ESFA, for the following transactions:

- acquiring a freehold of land or buildings.
- disposing of a freehold of land or buildings; and
- disposing of heritage assets beyond any limits set out in the trust's funding agreement in respect of the disposal of assets generally.

- taking up a leasehold or tenancy agreement on land or buildings from another party for a term of seven or more years.
- granting a leasehold interest, including a tenancy agreement, of any duration, on land and buildings to another party.

The consent of the Diocesan Trustees is needed before any purchase or disposal of freehold or leasehold property.

Inventories

It is the responsibility of each Academy to maintain an **inventory** of any portable item of equipment with an initial cost value of £200 or more.

Reporting responsibilities for disposals, write offs, leases and assets

In all transactions, irrespective of whether the Secretary of State's approval is required, the Trust will:

- obtain relevant professional advice where appropriate, including that of their external auditor where necessary;
- ensure that the decision represents value for money, and is justified as such;
- agree internal delegation levels within the Trust; and
- disclose aggregate figures for transactions in each of the relevant categories as a note to their annual accounts. In addition, separate disclosure is required in the annual accounts of each transaction at 17 above £5,000.

Novel, contentious and repercussive transactions

Novel and contentious transactions must always be referred to the ESFA for explicit prior authorisation.

Novel payments or other transactions are those in which the Trust has no experience or are outside the range of normal business activity for the trust.

Contentious transactions are those which might give rise to criticism of the Trust by the public or the media.

Repercussive transactions are those likely to cause pressure on other trusts to take a similar approach and hence have wider financial implications.

The ESFA consider that it is for trusts to use their judgement about when they should seek the prior advice of the ESFA. Public money must always be spent prudently and in ways that command broad public support.

If there is any doubt whether a transaction could be seen as novel, contentious or repercussive academies must seek advice from the CFO.

COUNTER FRAUD AND CORRUPTION STATEMENT

The Trust is an honest and ethical organisation. As such, it is opposed to and seeks to eliminate fraud and corruption by the way it conducts its business. The full Counter Fraud and Corruption

Policy sets out the Trust's approach and procedures for dealing with the risk of significant fraud or corruption.

In order to minimise the risk and impact of fraud and corruption, the Trust's objective is to embed a zero tolerance culture which deters fraudulent activity, encourages its prevention and promotes its detection and reporting.

Any instance of suspected fraud, corruption or financial irregularity must be reported immediately to the CFO who will, in liaison with the Accounting Officer, judge how the matter is investigated and whether to involve the Police.

The Trust must notify the ESFA, as soon as is operationally practical based on its particular circumstances, of any instances of fraud, theft and/or irregularity exceeding £5,000 individually, or £5,000 cumulatively in any academy financial year. Any unusual or systematic fraud, regardless of value, must also be reported.

Appendices to Financial Regulations Manual

TRUST GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY POLICY

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the Trust adheres to the required standards of conduct and that there is no perceived or real risk of corruption or conflict of interest.

2. Scope

The policy applies to all employees, members, directors and governors and should be read in conjunction with the Trust's Anti-Fraud, Corruption and Bribery Policy and the Employee Code of Conduct.

3. Policy for offers received

All offers of gifts or hospitality should be treated with caution.

The Code of Conduct provides full details of how to deal with all offers of gifts or hospitality. If employees, directors/governors are in any doubt about the acceptance of a gift or hospitality they should inform the Chief Financial Officer in advance and seek advice.

A register of gifts will be maintained in line with the policy and held by the Chief Financial Officer

4. Policy for providing hospitality

The Trust may provide hospitality in connection with its carry out its affairs where it is appropriate for the circumstances. The hospitality may be provided to:

- Directors and Local Governing Committee members
- Staff
- Representatives from firms or companies visiting the Trust
- Any other visitors connected with the business of the Trust

The hospitality provided should be modest and not normally exceed the provision of tea/coffee/sandwiches or working lunch or dinners.

5. No alcohol will be provided as part of either internal or external hospitality.

The ESFA is clear that alcohol purchases of any kind are inappropriate and should be treated as irregular expenditure by the Trust's external auditors

Hospitality provided outside of the Trust premises shall require the authorisation of the CEO/Accounting Officer/COO.

6. Policy for providing gifts

The Trust may occasionally provide gifts, where it can be demonstrated that the use of academy funds is appropriate and has due regard to propriety and regularity in the use of funds, for example token gifts/flowers (up to value £50) may be given to:

- volunteers or speakers to acknowledge services provided to the Trust.
- a longstanding employee who leaves

- an ill member of staff in exceptional circumstances

All gifts will require the approval of the Chief Financial Officer and such approval will be documented.

7. Monitoring

The register of gifts offered and received will be reviewed annually by the Finance/Resources Committee

FORM – EXEMPTION REQUEST FROM TRUST TENDERING PROCEDURES

Originator Employee

Academy/Trust

What is the main reason for the exemption based on the approved criteria for exemptions?

Please advise on details of the Company, amounts and duration of proposed contract

Please detail the reason why this approval cannot go through the standard procurement route

Approved yes/no – If no please detail the reason below

Approved by (Signature and Dates)

Chief Operating Officer

Accounting Officer

Chair of the Trust Finance & Resources Committee

COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE: FINANCE/AUDIT/RISK

1. The Directors have the power to establish any committee to assist in the conduct of the business of the Trust. If a committee is to have decision making authority, the committee board must comprise a majority of Directors, enabling a quorate decision to be made.
2. Details of the committees established by the Trust are noted in the Trust's Structure Chart appended to the Scheme of Delegation.
3. Where relevant the following functions may be delegated to any committee or committees dealing with matters of finance, audit and risk.

Finance

4. To ensure that the Trust Board is kept informed of all major financial issues concerning the Trust and its academies, the overall Trust budget and those of the individual academies, the management of funds against the budget, the benchmarking of financial performance and the heads of expenditure, the way funds are utilised (including value for money) and the way monies are secured.
5. To recommend the annual budget for the Trust and the academies to the Trust Board for approval, having consulted headteachers and (if appropriate) Local Governing Committees.
6. To receive reports from the headteachers regarding the Trust's/academies' finances. This will include reports on the monitoring of income against expenditure and proposals to revise forecasts for the year. The committee will work with the Trust and the headteachers to make any recommendations to the Trust Board.
7. To monitor the production, timeliness and accuracy of key financial statements in response to both statutory and local requirements.
8. To support (recommending and advising) the Trust Board in developing and then implementing a reserves policy and to consider the impact of strain in individual academy budgets.
9. To support (recommending and advising) the Trust Board in developing and then implementing the Financial Regulations Manual and associated procurement policy.
10. To review tenders for major contracts as specified in the Financial Regulations Manual. To approve or reject tender proposals or, where required, make recommendations to the Trust Board.
11. To recommend any changes in the Financial Regulations Manual, where significant, to the Trust Board. To review the operations of the Trust and the academies in relation to the procedures shown in the Financial Regulations Manual. To work with the headteachers to resolve breaches and to improve procedures as appropriate.
12. To monitor key financial and accounting systems and reviewing any audits of these or the general finances of the Trust and make recommendations to the Trust Board and/or the Local Governing Committees as appropriate.

Audit and Risk

13. Advise and report to the Directors in relation any organisational risks which might impede the development and implementation of a long term strategy for the success of the Trust. The Directors shall consider any such advice given by the Audit Committee.

14. Support the Directors in developing an organisational structure which reflects the Trust's values and enables the management systems, structures and processes to work effectively in line with legal requirements and to ensure sound financial management.
15. Support the Directors in the formulation of financial and risk management policies for the Trust and the Academies for achieving the aims and objectives set out in the Trust's Development Plan or long term strategic vision.
16. Advise the Directors on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Trust's systems of internal control and its arrangements for risk management, control and governance processes and securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness (value for money).
17. Regularly review the statement on internal control and make appropriate recommendation to the Directors and when appropriate communicate messages and advice to the Local Governing Committee, liaising as necessary with any responsible officer appointed by the Local Governing Committee to be responsible for financial oversight and risk management of the Academy's activities.
18. Support (and challenge when necessary) the Directors and in particular the Chief Executive Officer (being the Trust's "accounting officer") to ensure he or she satisfies his or her duty as accounting officer to:
 - 18.1. Ensuring value for money.
 - 18.2. Ensuring regularity and propriety.
 - 18.3. Ensuring prudent and economical administration.
 - 18.4. Avoiding waste and extravagance.
 - 18.5. Ensuring the efficient and effective use of resources.
 - 18.6. Keeping proper accounts.
19. Establish and implement a system of financial and risk reporting by the academies to the CFO. Finance manager to monitor the risks and share outcomes with LGC. Directors to oversee red risks to ensure that such a system complies with the Trust's legal obligations.
20. Red risks go to audit committee.
21. Review any financial and risk report submitted by the Academies and advising the Directors on any issues arising from it as well as making recommendations for future reports to sustain the integrity of the financial and risk management systems.
22. Advise on the formulation and implementation of a policy for the approval and signing of contracts, ensuring all contracts to be entered into by the Academy are appropriate, have been authorised (or are within delegated authority) and do not expose the Academy to undue risk.
23. Advise the Directors on the appointment, reappointment, dismissal and remuneration of auditors (both external auditors and internal audit).
24. Monitor the effectiveness of auditors, including the use of auditor performance indicators.
25. Ensure effective coordination between auditors ensuring that a consistent method of audit is adopted across all Academies.
26. Ensure that additional services undertaken by auditors are compatible with the audit independence and objectivity.
27. Agree the work programme of internal audit including the checking of financial controls, systems, transactions and risks.

28. Consider the reports of the auditors and, when appropriate, advise the Directors and the Academies of material control issues.
29. Monitor the implementation of agreed audit recommendations.
30. Advise on policies for the securing of the funds and assets of the Trust including by the prevention of loss through fraud and irregularity.
31. Ensure that all allegations of fraud and irregularity are appropriately investigated and control weaknesses addressed, working with the Directors and the Headteachers of the Academies, as appropriate.
32. Recommend the annual financial statements to the Directors for approval.

COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE: STANDARDS/INTERVENTION

1. The Directors have the power to establish any committee to assist in the conduct of the business of the Trust. If a committee is to have decision making authority, the committee board must comprise a majority of Directors, enabling a quorate decision to be made.
2. Details of the committees established by the Trust are noted in the Trust's Structure Chart appended to the Scheme of Delegation.
3. The following functions may be delegated to any committee dealing with standards (including governance), school improvement and intervention.
4. It is anticipated that these tasks will be carried out in conjunction with the Trust's Leadership Group where a separate Standards Committee is appointed. If there is no separate Standards Committee, these tasks will be undertaken by the Leadership Group under the guidance of the Chief Executive Officer and with the support of the Trust's Executive Team.

Standards

5. To consider any appropriate curriculum priorities to be implemented across the Trust.
6. To ensure that any statutory and Diocesan requirements relating to key policies on academy aims, special needs, admissions, EYFS, SEND, curriculum, relationships and sex education, charging, religious education, collective worship, attendance and behaviour policies are implemented.
7. To assist the Chief Executive Officer and the Headteachers of the Academies, as appropriate, in the formulation of statutory policies. Any statutory policies must be ratified by the Trust Board.
8. To review the performance of the Academies against agreed Key Performance Indicators.
9. To support the Trust Board with the development of a strategic plan for any Supported Academy which identifies agreed priorities and targets for improvement, focusing specifically on both standards and resource planning.
10. To work with the Chief Executive Officer and the Headteachers in developing the awareness of the Local Governing Committee of the Academy's curriculum priorities.
11. Assess the performance of the Academies as a group, developing a benchmarking tool which can be used to drive further improvements, advising the Trust Board on the effectiveness of this and liaising with the Diocesan Department for Education to implement any Diocesan guidance or advice.
12. Seek to identify areas where greater collaboration between the Academies can improve standards and outcomes.
13. With the assistance of the Chief Executive Officer and the school improvement team carry out periodic reviews of the standards of teaching and learning in each of the Academies.
14. To review and recommend to the Trust Board personnel procedures such as recruitment, redundancy, discipline, grievance, capability and pay policies, having regard at all times to any guidance issued by the Catholic Education Service.
15. To review employment practices of the Trust, recommending to the Trust Board adoption of new practices where appropriate.

16. To ensure that the employment and personnel functions of the Trust remain in line with legal requirements and the conduct of a good employer.
17. To support the Local Governing Committees in reviewing the staffing structure and pay incentives of the Academies from time to time, working with the Chief Executive Officer and the Headteachers and the appropriate management teams, ensuring that the Trust structure maintains high performing academies.
18. To ensure there is a suitable and effective appeals procedures for HR matters.
19. To work with the Chief Executive Officer in engaging with the trade unions and maintaining good employment relations, calling on the support of the Diocesan Department for Education when needed.
20. To draft and keep under a review a policy statement on staff consultation for approval by the Trust Board and to undertake any formal consultations on personnel matters.
21. To review and recommend for adoption the procedures for dealing with discipline and grievances and ensure that all staff are informed of them.

Governance

22. In consultation with the Diocesan Department for Education, to monitor the effectiveness of the Scheme of Delegation and to consult with staff and the Local Governing Committees where change is advisable or has been recommended by the Diocesan Department for Education.
23. In collaboration with the Diocesan Department for Education, to develop and implement a programme of Director and Governor training.
24. To undertake a regular skills audit of each of the Local Governing Committees and making appropriate recommendations to the Trust Board for appointments and removals where necessary.
25. To vet all nominations for appointments to the Local Governing Committees.
26. To support the Chairs of the Local Governing Committees to ensure they are working effectively.
27. To develop and support the adoption of best practice in governance at all levels in the Trust, having regard to any advice and guidance of the Diocesan Department for Education.
28. In consultation with the Diocesan Department for Education, to advise the Trust Board on any intervention at Local Governing Committee level where there has been a break down in governance.
29. To advise and lead on the appointments of clerks to the Trust Board and the Local Governing Committees and to support their training to ensure they are knowledgeable about the governance arrangements within the Trust.

COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE: LEADERSHIP GROUP

1. The Directors have the power to establish any committee to assist in the conduct of the business of the Trust. If a committee is to have decision making authority, the committee board must comprise a majority of Directors, enabling a quorate decision to be made.
2. Details of the committees established by the Trust are noted in the Trust's Structure Chart appended to the Scheme of Delegation.
3. The purpose of the Leadership Group is to provide a focus for the setting of policy and to develop the strategic vision of the Trust. The Leadership Group will both support and advise the Trust Board and will facilitate communication between the Trust Board and the Local Governing Committees as well as provide an opportunity for the Academies to explore and develop areas of collaboration and shared working.
4. The Trust Board will consult the Leadership Group regularly and specifically on the matters noted in the Trust's Leadership and Governance Decision Planner as being the responsibility of the Directors and the Chief Executive Officer.
5. All Headteachers will be invited to participate in the Leadership Group/s. The Chief Executive Officer will chair meetings of the Leadership Group and will report to the Trust Board on matters discussed and agreed within the Leadership Group.
6. In the event the Leadership Group becomes unworkable due to size or the location of the schools, the Trust Board may establish sub groups based on phase or location.
7. The Leadership Group will also act as a strategic advisor on educational matters to ensure the long term success of the Academies and that continuous improvement is made within all Academies.
8. The Leadership Group will assist with succession planning and the building of leadership capacity.
9. Meet regularly as required by the CEO.
10. The full Leadership Group (i.e. including Chairs of the Local Governing Committees) will meet **at least** twice a year. The agenda for the Headteacher meetings will be flexible and adapted to need. It is expected that the focus for the full Leadership Group meetings will be as follows:

Focus for meetings to include:
Collaboration Governor Skills Training and Development Cross MAT Governance Support Admissions/Need Curriculum Priorities/Work Planning Strategy Vision Review of Year/ Planning Forward

11. A representative of the Trust Board may be asked to attend at the invitation of the Chair of the Leadership Group.
12. The Trust Board recognises the important role played by the Leadership Group and commits to keeping the Leadership Group informed and to have regard to any advice or guidance provided by the Leadership Group on any matter affecting the Trust or the Academies.

13. The Leadership Group will work closely with any Standards Committee, supporting the functions to be carried out by the Standards Committee.

COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE: LOCAL GOVERNING COMMITTEE

Purpose

1. A Local Governing Committee (LGC) shall be established for each of the Academies, except where the Trust Board determines in a particular case that more than one Academy should be governed by the same LGC.
2. The purpose of the Local Governing Committee is to provide local accountability and day to day support and oversight of the Academy's leadership team.
3. The roles and responsibilities of the Local Governing Committee are set out in the Table of Key Delegated Responsibilities.

Constitution

4. Governors appointed to a Local Governing Committee shall be appointed as follows:
 - 4.1. such number of Foundation Governors appointed by the Diocesan Bishop to ensure that the Foundation Governors outnumber all other Governors by at least 2;
 - 4.2. the Headteacher of the Academy (or Headteachers where the Academies are federated and there is no Executive Headteacher);
 - 4.3. up to 1 Staff Governor, elected or appointed through such process as the Local Governing Committee may determine;
 - 4.4. up to 1 Parent Governor, elected by parents or carers of registered pupils at the Academy and being a parent or carer of a pupil at the Academy at the time when elected;
 - 4.5. In exceptional circumstances, for a limited period of time, up to 1 additional (or Non-Foundation) governor may be appointed by the Local Governing Committee with the approval of the Trust Board.
5. There is no power to co-opt Governors to the Local Governing Committee but advisers (including other members of staff in the Academy) may attend meetings provided they do not take part in any decision making.
6. All Governors must undertake to uphold the object and mission of the Trust and must comply with the Governor Code of Conduct appended to the Scheme of Delegation.

Term of Office

7. The term of office for any Governor shall be 4 years (save that this time limit shall not apply to the Headteacher or any post which is held ex officio, who will serve for as long as he or she remains in office). Subject to remaining eligible to be a particular type of Governor, any person may be re-appointed or re-elected to the Local Governing Committee.
8. A Governor shall serve one particular school for no more than 3 terms of office.

Resignation and Removal of members of the Local Governing Committee

9. A Governor shall cease to hold office if he or she resigns his or her office or is removed by the Bishop or in the case of any Governor who is not a Foundation Governor by the Trust Board (which

the Directors reserve the power to do without the need to provide any reasons for removal). Any vacancy on a Local Governing Committee will trigger an appropriate appointment or election and must be notified to the Trust Board and the Diocesan Department for Education.

10. Any person who would not be eligible to be a Director in accordance with the Trust's Articles of Association will not be eligible for appointment or election to the Local Governing Committee and must resign from the Local Governing Committee if they become ineligible. Details of eligibility to serve as a Governor are set out in the Governor Code of Conduct.
11. If any Governor is also an employee of the Trust and ceases to be employed to work at the Academy or within the Trust, then he or she shall be deemed to have resigned from the Local Governing Committee and shall cease to serve on the Local Governing Committee automatically on termination of his or her employment.
12. Where a person who serves on the Local Governing Committee resigns his or her office or is removed from office, that person or, where he or she is removed from office, those removing him or her, shall give written notice thereof to the Chair of the Local Governing Committee, copied to the Clerk to the Local Governing Committee.

Appointment of the Chair and Vice-Chair

13. Subject to any direction by the Trust Board, Governors shall each school year (typically at the first meeting of the year) elect a Chair and Vice-Chair from amongst the Foundation Governors.
14. The Chair and Vice Chair will cease to hold office if they no longer serve as a Governor. The same person cannot hold more than one office.
15. The Clerk to the Local Governing Committee shall act as chair during that part of any meeting at which the Chair and Vice Chair are elected.
16. Any election of the Chair and Vice Chair which is contested shall be held by secret ballot.
17. More details as to the role and responsibilities of the Chair are set out in the Governor Code of Conduct.

Meetings

18. Subject to LGC approval of the minutes of the meeting, the minutes will be kept and signed at the same or next subsequent meeting by the person acting as chair thereof. The minutes shall include a record of:
 - 18.1. all appointments of officers made by the Local Governing Committee; and
 - 18.2. all proceedings at meetings of the Local Governing Committee and of committees/working parties of the Local Governing Committee including the names of all persons present at each such meeting.
19. The Clerk shall ensure that copies of minutes of all meeting of the Local Governing Committee shall be provided to the Central Team as soon as reasonably practicable after those minutes are approved.
20. Subject to this Scheme of Delegation, the Local Governing Committee may regulate its proceedings as Governors think fit, provided at all times that there is openness and transparency in matters relating to the Local Governing Committee. The Local Governing Committee is expected to meet at least once a term but may meet more often if felt appropriate or if requested to meet by the Trust Board.

21. The Trust Board may direct the Local Governing Committee to allow either Directors, any member of the Trust's Executive Team or a Governor from another Local Governing Committee in the Trust to attend meetings of the Local Governing Committee. Such persons may engage in discussion but will not be permitted to vote on any resolution of the Local Governing Committee.
22. Meetings of the Local Governing Committee shall be convened by the clerk to the Local Governing Committee. In exercising their functions under this Scheme of Delegation the clerk shall comply with any direction:
 - 22.1. given by the Local Governing Committee; or
 - 22.2. given by the Chair or, in their absence or where there is a vacancy in the office of chair, the Vice-Chair.
23. Any three Governors may, by notice in writing given to the clerk, requisition a meeting of the Local Governing Committee; and it shall be the duty of the clerk to convene such a meeting as soon as is reasonably practicable.
24. Each Governor shall be given at least seven clear days before the date of a meeting:
 - 24.1. notice thereof and sent to each Governor at the email address provided by each Governor from time to time; and
 - 24.2. a copy of the agenda for the meeting.
25. Provided that where the Chair or, in his or her absence or where there is a vacancy in the office of Chair, the Vice-Chair, so determines on the ground that there are matters demanding urgent consideration, it shall be sufficient if the notice of a meeting, and the copy of the agenda thereof are given within such shorter period as they direct.
26. The convening of a meeting and the proceedings conducted thereat shall not be invalidated by reason of any individual not having received notice of the meeting or a copy of the agenda thereof.
27. If three Governors are suggesting that a previous decision made by the LGC is rescinded, they must contact the Central Team for advice on procedural matters.
28. A meeting of the Local Governing Committee shall be terminated forthwith if:
 - 28.1. the Governors so resolve.
 - 28.2. the number of Governors present ceases to constitute a quorum for a meeting of the Local Governing Committee in accordance with paragraph 31.
29. Where in accordance with paragraph 31 a meeting is not held or is terminated before all the matters specified as items of business on the agenda for the meeting have been disposed of, a further meeting shall be convened by the clerk as soon as is reasonably practicable, but in any event within seven days of the date on which the meeting was originally to be held or was so terminated.
30. Where the Local Governing Committee resolves in accordance with paragraph 31 to adjourn a meeting before all the items of business on the agenda have been disposed of, the Local Governing Committee shall before doing so determine the time and date at which a further meeting is to be held for the purposes of completing the consideration of those items, and it shall direct the clerk to convene a meeting accordingly.

Quorum

31. The quorum for a meeting of the Local Governing Committee, and any vote on any matter thereat, shall be three. The proceedings of the Local Governing Committee shall not be invalidated by any

vacancy on the board or any defect in the election, appointment or nomination of any Governor, providing the defect was not dishonestly made.

32. The Local Governing Committee may act notwithstanding any vacancies on its board, but, if the numbers of persons serving is less than the number fixed as the quorum, the continuing persons may act only for the purpose of filling vacancies or of calling a general meeting.
33. Subject to this Scheme of Delegation, every question to be decided at a meeting of the Local Governing Committee shall be determined by a majority of the votes of the persons present and entitled to vote on the question. Every Governor shall have one vote.
34. Where there is an equal division of votes, the Chair shall have a casting vote in addition to any other vote they may have.
35. A resolution in writing, signed by all the persons entitled to receive notice of a meeting of the Local Governing Committee, shall be valid and effective as if it had been passed at a meeting of the Local Governing Committee duly convened and held. Such a resolution may consist of several documents in the same form, each signed by one or more of the members of the Local Governing Committee and may include an electronic communication by or on behalf of the member indicating their agreement to the form of resolution providing that the member has previously notified the Local Governing Committee in writing of the email address or addresses which the Governor will use.
36. Minutes of meetings of the Local Governing Committee shall be published redacting any aspect which is confidential, or it would not be appropriate to disclose in light of the Data Protection Act 2018.
37. Any Governor shall be able to participate in meetings of the Local Governing Committee by telephone or video conference provided that the Governor has indicated prior to the meeting a wish to do so and has provided appropriate details to enable this and the meeting has access to suitable equipment.

Notices

38. Any notice to be given to or by any person pursuant to these Terms of Reference and more generally the Scheme of Delegation (including a notice calling a meeting of the Local Governing Committee) shall be in writing or shall be given using electronic communications to an address for the time being notified for that purpose to the person giving the notice. In this Scheme of Delegation, "address" in relation to electronic communications, includes a number or address used for the purposes of such communications.
39. A notice may be given by the Local Governing Committee to its members either personally or by sending it by post in a prepaid envelope addressed to the member at his or her registered address or by leaving it at that address or by giving it using electronic communications to an address for the time being notified to the Local Governing Committee by the Governor. A member whose registered address is not within the United Kingdom and who gives to the Local Governing Committee an address within the United Kingdom at which notices may be given to them, or an address to which notices may be sent using electronic communications, shall be entitled to have notices given to them at that address, but otherwise no such member shall be entitled to receive any notice from the Local Governing Committee.
40. A Governor present, either in person or by proxy, at any meeting of the Local Governing Committee shall be deemed to have received notice of the meeting and, where necessary, of the purposes for which it was called.

41. Proof that an envelope containing a notice was properly addressed, prepaid and posted shall be conclusive evidence that the notice was given. Proof that a notice contained in an electronic communication was sent in accordance with guidance issued by the Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators shall be conclusive evidence that the notice was given. A notice shall be deemed to be given at the expiration of 48 hours after the envelope containing it was posted or, in the case of a notice contained in an electronic communication, at the expiration of 48 hours after the time it was sent.

DIRECTOR CORE COMPETENCIES AND CODE OF CONDUCT

Introduction

As a charity and company limited by guarantee, [name of the Catholic Education Trust] (the “Trust”) is governed by a Board of Directors (the “Directors”). The Trust’s charitable purpose is the advancement of the Catholic religion and the Trust is accountable to the Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle, the diocesan authority for the purposes of the academies and the religious authority for all matters. Whether a Foundation Director is appointed by the Bishop or a non-foundation governor is approved by the Bishop, all Directors and governors must comply with the wishes of the Bishop and fulfil the charitable object of the Trust, acting at all times in observance of the values of the Catholic Church. The Bishop is a Member of the Trust and appoints all other Members.

Whilst the Directors are accountable to the Bishop and the other Members of the Trust, the Directors have overall responsibility and accountability for all strategic and operational matters within the Trust and have been delegated decision making authority by the Members. The Board is intended to be strategic not operational and has delegated the day to day management of the business and the responsibility for the running of the academies to those officers of the Trust with executive and leadership responsibilities. The Board’s main purpose is to:

- determine the vision and values of the Trust consistent with those of the Bishop;
- support leadership in determining and fulfilling the strategic direction of the Trust;
- hold leadership to account and ensure staff well-being; and
- oversee the financial performance of the Trust ensuring there are systems in place to manage risk and ensure money is well spent.

The Trust Board have established Local Governing Committees to assist them in fulfilling these governance responsibilities and to provide additional support to leadership. Further detail can be found in the Trust’s Scheme of Delegation.

The Trust is an exempt charity whose principal regulator is the Secretary of State for Education. Whilst this means the activities and constitution of the Trust are primarily determined by the Department for Education subject to the wishes of the Bishop, nevertheless the Trust is subject to company law and charity law and occasionally the jurisdiction of the Charity Commission. The Directors therefore have both responsibilities as directors of a company and trustees of a charity.

Legal Duties of the Directors

The Directors of the Trust have a fiduciary duty to act in good faith in the best interests of the charity. This duty includes a responsibility to do the following:

- To ensure compliance with any legal obligations;
- To report on the charitable objectives (the Trust must prepare accounts in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice for Charities, the so called Charity SORP);
- To fulfil the charitable objects as set out in its constitution (the Articles of Association) and to act in a way which is compliant with the rules contained in the Articles and the Diocesan Memorandum of Understanding;

- To act with integrity and to avoid any personal conflicts of interest and not to misuse any Trust funds or assets;
- To act prudently in the financial management of the Trust, avoiding putting any assets, funds or reputation of the Trust at undue risk;
- To exercise reasonable care and skill, using personal knowledge and experience to ensure the Trust is well run and efficient;
- To act responsibly, getting advice from others, including professional advisors, where appropriate.

Under company law the Directors must avoid conflicts of interest and act prudently. There are specific legal duties where a company is insolvent or there is a threat of insolvency. More detail can be found in the **Academy Trust Handbook** and Directors must be especially careful where they may have a personal interest in a matter which involves the Trust. Familial relationships at Board and leadership level are discouraged. Directors must comply with the ESFA's Related Party Transaction policy which will also address any specific requirements regarding trading with connected parties. Directors must act independently and in the best interest of the Trust even if those interests conflict with those of the body or organisation that might have appointed or nominated such Directors to serve on the Board. The role of a Director is unpaid (except for the reimbursement of reasonable expenses).

All Directors will be approved by the Diocesan Department for Education. Foundation Directors are appointed by the Bishop and will be practising Catholics. Non Foundation Directors may be approved by the Bishop, but in both cases with the approval of the other. Whilst Non Foundation Directors are not expected to be practicing Catholics, they will nevertheless be expected to preserve and uphold the Catholic character of the Trust and fulfil the wishes of the Bishop in so far as these relate to the management of the Trust and its Schools. Directors are appointed for a term of 4 years and can be reappointed on the expiry of such term provided that no Director is to be appointed for more than 3 terms of office in one particular trust.

Specific Duties of the Directors

The specific tasks and responsibilities of the Directors include the following, to

- hold governance accountability.
- determine strategic vision and overarching strategic plan.
- provide strategic leadership and governance.
- provide challenge and support to senior leaders undertaking the recruitment and performance of any chief executive officer.
- develop and decide strategic and operational policies.
- facilitate collaboration.
- co-ordinate and oversee shared services and resources.
- develop and oversee the implementation of Trust development plan.
- approve of performance benchmarks.
- approve overall Trust budget and advise on School budgets.
- monitor expenditure in accordance with appropriate authorisations.
- oversee financial governance and risk management.

- implement the Trust's reserves/contingency policy.
- ensure appropriate insurance or risk cover is put in place.
- appoint headteachers and monitor the performance management of senior leaders.
- develop shared staff training programmes and opportunities for professional development.
- support the development and building of leadership and governance capacity at School level.
- approve of site and asset management strategy.
- oversee any significant capital expenditure and building projects.
- approve of all funding applications.
- decision maker for all appeals.

Link Directors may be given primary responsibility for particular functions such as audit and financial management, HR, Trust policies and procedures, safeguarding, academy liaison and communication with the view to matching skills and experience to functions. This will not affect collective and overall individual responsibility and accountability but Directors are expected to use their skills and experience in the fulfilment of their duties.

Core Competencies and Skills

The following are the core competencies and skills expected of all Directors:

- To work as a team.
- To attend meetings and be prepared to contribute to discussions and commit to agreed actions.
- To be respectful of the views of others and to be open to new ideas and thoughts.
- To treat all confidential information confidentially.
- To act with integrity, avoiding any personal conflicts of interest and complying with the Trust's Conflict of Interest policy.
- To develop a deep understanding of the vision and ethos of the Trust and its academies and the roles played by all individuals in fulfilment of the Trust's mission.
- To understand the policies and procedures of the Trust and how these flow down to the academies.
- To support the Trust in public and act as an ambassador of the Trust and the academies.
- To commit to training and skills development.
- To be ready to ask questions.
- To be focused on problem solving and be ready to learn from past experiences.
- To adhere to the Nolan **Seven Principles of Public Life**.

Personal Qualities and Values

The role of a Director is challenging but should be rewarding. Directors are expected to be held in high regard and to provide an example to others. As such, Directors will have the following qualities and values:

- A desire to create positive change and life experiences for young people.
- A deep seated commitment to the aims and objectives of the Trust and the Catholic Church.
- A willingness to devote time and energy.
- An ability to build productive and supportive professional relationships.
- A commitment to equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory practices.
- An understanding of the importance of keeping children safe.
- An ability to think and act strategically.
- An ability to use financial and workforce data to inform decision-making.
- Appropriate levels of literacy in English.
- A person who is reliable, acts with integrity and is capable of good independent judgement.
- Is able to satisfy any requirements set by the Bishop.

Specific skills may be needed if a Director is to take responsibility for and lead on a specific area or to meet a skills shortage that has been identified. The Trust has additional expectations of its Chair and Vice Chair and these are appended to this Code of Conduct. A regular skills audit will be undertaken and Directors should expect to be able to articulate their contribution to the success of the Trust and the academies.

Legal Requirements

Before appointment a DBS check will be made and enquiries made to establish that Directors satisfy on an ongoing basis the legal requirements for charity trustees. A list of disqualifying reasons is provided by the Charity Commission, click **here** for details. Individuals who are disqualified from being a charity trustee are deemed to have resigned with immediate effect.

Removal of a Director

Any concerns regarding a Director's behaviour and actions which may impact adversely on the Trust or fellow Directors will be addressed either by the Bishop or the Chair of the Trust. Except where changes to the Trust Board are made for operational reasons for example to address skills shortages or to satisfy the requirements of the Bishop, steps to remove a Director for personal reasons are expected to be taken only in exceptional circumstances for example involving the following:

- A failure to uphold the Catholic values of the Trust and in a way that is contrary to Catholic teaching;
- There has been serious misconduct (which will be considered on a case by case basis but as a guide any breach of this Code of Conduct will give rise to a legitimate complaint);
- A Director displays repeated and serious incompetence (e.g. consistently fails to attend meetings and/or engage with training or address any skills gaps such that their ability to make a meaningful contribution is compromised);

- The Director has engaged in conduct or behaviour which is aimed at undermining fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs;
- The actions of the Director are significantly detrimental to the effective operation of the Trust Board or the Trust more widely, distracting the Trust Board from its core strategic functions and/or the actions of the Director interfere with the operational efficiency of the Trust or any of its academies thereby wasting a significant amount of executive, headteacher and/or senior leadership time;

Any decision to remove will be made in accordance with the Trust's Articles of Association and applicable law. Any right of appeal will be subject to applicable law.

Review

This Director Code of Conduct has been adopted by the Trust Board on 11 February 2022. It is subject to regular review.

Additional Expectations of the Chair and Vice Chair

The Chair and Vice Chair are elected by and from amongst the Trust Board, but they must be Foundation Directors and regard must be had to any further requirements of the Bishop.

Elections are expected to take place at the beginning of every year and any interim appointment (for example following the resignation of the current Chair) will be terminated or confirmed at the next appropriate meeting.

Specific Duties

The Chair's specific duties are to:

- Ensure the Bishop's wishes are fulfilled, liaising directly with the Diocesan Department for Education and representatives of the Bishop.
- Provide a clear lead and direction for the Board in formulating and delivering the vision for the Trust.
- Build an effective team, attracting individuals to the Board with necessary skills and experience, promoting equality and diversity, ensuring priority is given to those who can make a positive contribution to work of the Trust and driving school improvement across all academies.
- Ensure new Directors are properly introduced to the work of the Trust and the Board and to support their development as effective and valued members of the Board maximising their contribution to the Trust in doing so.
- Work closely with the chief executive officer to ensure there is proper challenge and encouragement of Directors, executive officers and those with leadership responsibilities.
- Provide direct support to the chief executive officer and take the lead in the recruitment and performance management of this role as well as the review of pay and conditions of service.
- Take a lead role in any decision to suspend or discipline the chief executive officer.
- Ensure that school improvement is the focus of all policy and strategy for the Trust, reminding the Directors of this as often as necessary.
- Hold the Directors to account, ensuring the business of the Board is conducted efficiently and effectively, chairing meetings ensuring all Directors have the opportunity to contribute and are listened to with clear decisions being made when necessary, including reporting on the Board's effectiveness to the Members as required.
- Be available when there is a need to act quickly, taking, or supporting the chief executive officer in taking, urgent action and making decisions, subject to subsequent ratification by the Board as necessary.
- Act a focal point and advocate for the Board, liaising as necessary with any regulatory body, the Local Governing Committee and those representing the wider community.
- That any complaints about the Trust or the Academy, the actions of the local governing committee or an individual Governor or the headteacher are dealt with in a timely and effective manner in line with the relevant policy.

Specific Responsibilities

As the guardian of the Board's effectiveness, the Chair has a specific responsibility to ensure:

- That reporting by executive officers is clear, concise, appropriate and comprehensive, reducing unnecessary paperwork.
- That meetings of the Board are held regularly and there is a clear agenda which has been communicated to all Directors which focusses appropriately on strategic matters, acknowledging that when urgent meetings are required to discuss exceptional business that as much preparation as may be possible is made for these.
- That the business of the Board is conducted as openly and transparently as possible.
- That decisions taken by the Board are implemented and not circumvented.
- That Directors adhere to the Director Code of Conduct and that the Chair takes appropriate and firm action where this appears not to be the case.
- That the Board undertakes regular reviews of any skills gaps or lack of experience and/or capacity and takes active steps to address these.
- That the Board remains focused on the Trust's key strategic priorities and that individual Directors either as a group or committee or as individuals do not seek to become overly involved in operational matters.
- There is proper and adequate succession planning.
- That any complaints about the Trust, the actions of the Board or an individual Director or chief executive officer are dealt with in a timely, compliant and effective manner.

Additional Skills

As well as the skills required of a Director, the Chair should be able to demonstrate the following attributes:

- An understanding of the framework within which corporate bodies function.
- Strong communication skills.
- Ability to prioritise.
- Ability to chair meetings and encourage the participation of others.
- Ability to build and lead a team.
- Leadership or managerial experience.
- Ability to delegate.
- Ability to mediate.

GOVERNOR CORE COMPETENCIES AND CODE OF CONDUCT

Introduction

The Bishop Wilkinson Catholic Education Trust (the “Trust”) has been established by the Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle to safeguard Catholic education in the Diocese. The Trust is governed by a Board of Directors (the “Directors”). The Directors have overall responsibility and accountability for the Trust, reporting to the Bishop as required. The Board has delegated authority to act on behalf of the Trust. The Board fulfils a strategic function and its main purpose is to:

- determine the vision and values of the Trust consistent with those of the Bishop.
- support leadership in determining and fulfilling the strategic direction of the Trust.
- hold leadership to account and ensure staff well-being.
- oversee the financial performance of the Trust ensuring there are systems in place to manage risk and ensure money is well spent.

The Directors have established local governing committees to assist them in fulfilling these governance responsibilities and to provide additional support to leadership. The governors serving on these local governing committees are answerable to the Directors and the Bishop. All governors, including those not appointed by but with the approval of the Bishop, must comply with the wishes of the Bishop and fulfil the charitable object of the Trust, acting at all times in observance of the values of the Catholic Church. The main functions of the local governing committees are to:

- ensure the Academy meets the needs of its community.
- protect the Academy’s character and distinctiveness.
- support teaching and learning to ensure high quality provision.
- safeguard pupil and staff well-being.
- ensure the Academy works within its budget.

Further detail can be found in the Trust’s Scheme of Delegation.

Duties of the Governors

Governors are expected to act in good faith in the best interests of the Trust and the Academies for whom the Trust has responsibility. This means governors have a responsibility to do the following when dealing with matters for the Academy:

- To ensure compliance with any legal obligations.
- To act in a way which is compliant with the charitable object of the Trust, its Articles of Association and the Scheme of Delegation, including the Diocesan Memorandum of Understanding.
- To act with integrity and to avoid any personal conflicts of interest and not to misuse any Trust or Academy funds or assets.
- To act prudently in the financial management of the Academy, avoiding putting any assets, funds or reputation of the Academy or the Trust more widely at undue risk.

- To exercise reasonable care and skill, using personal knowledge and experience to ensure the Academy is well run and efficient.
- To act responsibly, getting advice from others, including professional advisors, where appropriate.

There is specific emphasis on the obligation on governors to avoid conflicts of interest and to act prudently in the **Academy Trust Handbook** and governors must be especially careful where they may have a personal interest in a matter which involves either the Trust or the Academy. Familial relationships at governor and leadership level are discouraged. Governors must comply with the Trust's Conflict of Interest policy.

Governors must act independently and in the best interest of the Trust even if those interests conflict with those of the body or organisation that might have appointed or nominated them to serve on the local governing committee. The role of a Governor is unpaid (except for the reimbursement of reasonable expenses).

Governors are appointed for a term of 4 years and can be reappointed on the expiry of such term provided that no Governor is to be appointed for more than 3 terms of office to a particular school. Foundation Governors are appointed by the Bishop and will be practicing Catholics.

Specific Duties of the Governors

The specific tasks and responsibilities of the Governors (and the local governing committee) are to:

- decide the Academy's strategic vision and uphold the Academy's distinctiveness and unique Catholic character, in harmony with the Trust's strategic vision and ethos.
- support senior leadership team generally and with specific emphasis on target setting, pupil monitoring and analysing progress data to inform curriculum and budgeting priorities.
- approve of Academy development/action plan.
- approve any significant capital expenditure.
- oversee expenditure ensuring the Academy works within its budget and implement the Trust's risk and financial management policies ensuring probity, prudence and efficiency.
- play an active part in the recruitment of the headteacher by the Trust Board.
- support the senior leadership team in the development and review of an appropriate staffing structure.
- support the headteacher in the recruitment and performance management of personnel.
- responsible for staff welfare and well-being, supporting the senior leadership team in monitoring absence and sickness.
- promote collaboration with other schools in the Trust.
- develop and review delegated school policies (e.g. admissions, pupil behaviour, safeguarding).
- provide advice and feedback to the Directors, ensuring the Academy is meeting the needs of its community.
- undertake all and any appropriate community consultation.
- provide a point of contact for parents, carers and other members of the local community, maintaining an effective link to the wider community.
- evaluate its performance ensuring appropriate training and development so that knowledge, skills and behaviour are appropriate for a dynamic education environment.

Individual Governors may be given primary responsibility for particular functions such as standards/school improvement, budgets, safeguarding, community liaison and communication with the view to matching skills and experience to functions. This will not affect collective and overall individual responsibility and accountability but Governors are expected to use their skills and experience in the fulfilment of their duties.

Core Competencies and Skills

The following are the core competencies and skills expected of all Governors:

- To work as a team.
- To attend meetings and be prepared to contribute to discussions and commit to agreed actions.
- To be respectful of the views of others and to be open to new ideas and thoughts.
- To treat all information confidentially.
- To act with integrity, avoiding any personal conflicts of interest and complying with the Trust's Conflict of Interest policy.
- To develop a deep understanding of the vision and ethos of the Trust and its Academies and the roles played by all individuals in fulfilment of the Trust's mission.
- To understand the policies and procedures of the Trust and how these flow down to the Academies.
- To support the Trust in public and act as an ambassador of the Trust and the Academies.
- To commit to training and skills development.
- To be ready to ask questions.
- To be focused on problem solving and be ready to learn from past experiences.
- To adhere to the Nolan **Seven Principles of Public Life**.

Personal Qualities and Values

The role of a Governor is challenging but should be rewarding. Governors are expected to be held in high regard and to provide an example to others. As such, Governors will have the following qualities and values:

- A desire to create positive change and life experiences for young people.
- A deep seated commitment to the aims and objectives of the Trust and the Catholic Church.
- A willingness to devote time and energy.
- An ability to build productive and supportive professional relationships.
- A commitment to equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory practices.
- An understanding of the importance of keeping children safe.
- An ability to think and act strategically.
- An ability to use financial and workforce data to inform decision-making.
- Appropriate levels of literacy in English and IT.

- A person who is reliable, acts with integrity and is capable of good independent judgement.
- Is able to satisfy any requirements set by the Trust Board and the Bishop.

Specific skills may be needed if a Director is to take responsibility for and lead on a specific area or to meet a skills shortage that has been identified. The Trust has additional expectations of the Chair and Vice Chair of the local governing committee and these are appended to this Code of Conduct. A regular skills audit will be undertaken and Governors should expect to be able to articulate their contribution to the success of the Trust and the Academies.

Legal Requirements

Before appointment a DBS check will be made and enquiries made to establish that Governors satisfy on an ongoing basis the legal requirements for charity trustees. A list of disqualifying reasons is provided by the Charity Commission. Individuals who are disqualified from being a charity trustee are deemed to have resigned with immediate effect.

Removal of a Governor

Any concerns regarding a Governor's behaviour and actions which may impact adversely on the Church, the Trust, the Academy or fellow Governors will be addressed either by the Bishop (who has the power to remove any Foundation Governor) or the Chair of the local governing committee (or if need be by the Trust Chair). Except where changes to the local governing committee are made for operational reasons, for example, to address skills shortages or to satisfy the requirements of the Bishop, steps to remove a Governor for personal reasons are expected to be taken only in exceptional circumstances, for example, involving the following:

- A failure to uphold the Catholic values of the Trust and in a way that is contrary to Catholic teaching;
- There has been serious misconduct (which will be considered on a case by case basis but as a guide any breach of this Code of Conduct will give rise to a legitimate complaint);
- A Governor displays repeated and serious incompetence (e.g. consistently fails to attend meetings and/or engage with training or address any skills gaps such that their ability to make a meaningful contribution is compromised);
- The Governor has engaged in conduct or behaviour which is aimed at undermining fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs;
- The actions of the Governor are significantly detrimental to the effective operation of the local governing committee, the Academy or the Trust more widely, distracting the local governing committee from its core strategic functions and/or the actions of the Governor interfere with the operational efficiency of the Academy or the Trust thereby wasting a significant amount of executive, headteacher and/or senior leadership time;

The decision to remove a Foundation Governor will be made by the Bishop on the advice of the Trust Board, who will consult both the Academy headteacher and the Chair of the local governing committee. Any decision to remove a Governor will be communicated to the Governor concerned who will be given an opportunity to make representations (in writing or verbally) to those removing him or her. It is not expected (or required by law) that the written details of the case against the Governor will be provided.

Review

This Governor Code of Conduct has been adopted by the Trust Board on 11 February 2022. It is subject to regular review.

Additional Expectations of the Chair and Vice Chair

The Chair and Vice Chair are elected by and from within the local governing committee, but they must be Foundation Governors. Regard must be had to any recommendations from the Trust Board, or any requirements of the Bishop. If the Trust Board requires that its approval be sought to any appointment of the Chair and Vice Chair (which the Directors are free to decide from time to time), then any appointment by the local governing committee will be subject to ratification by the Trust Board. Elections are expected to take place at the beginning of every year and any interim appointment (for example following the resignation of the current Chair) will be terminated or confirmed at the next appropriate meeting.

Specific Duties

The Chair's specific duties are to:

- Ensure the Bishop's wishes are fulfilled.
- Provide a clear lead and direction for the local governing committee.
- Build an effective team, attracting individuals to the local governing committee with necessary skills and experience, promoting equality and diversity, ensuring priority is given to those who can make a positive contribution to the Academy and the work of the Trust and who will provide a focus for driving up and maintaining high standards in the Academy.
- Ensure new Governors are properly introduced to the work of the local governing committee and the Trust more widely and to support their development as effective and valued members of the local governing committee maximising their contribution to the Academy and the Trust in doing so.
- Work closely with the headteacher of the Academy to ensure there is proper challenge and encouragement of Governors and the Academy's senior leadership team.
- Provide direct support to the headteacher of the Academy and to both the Trust Chair and any chief executive officer of the Trust in relation to any recruitment and performance management of this role as well as the review of pay and conditions of service.
- Provide support to the Trust Chair and any chief executive officer in any decision to suspend or discipline the headteacher of the Academy.
- Ensure that school improvement is the focus of all policy and strategy for the Academy, reminding Governors of this as often as necessary.
- Hold the Governors to account, ensuring the business of the local governing committee is conducted efficiently and effectively, chairing meetings ensuring all Governors have the opportunity to contribute and are listened to with clear decisions being made when necessary, including reporting on the local governing committee's effectiveness to the Trust Board as required.
- Be available when there is a need to act quickly, taking, or supporting the Academy headteacher (and if need be any chief executive officer) in taking, urgent action and making decisions, subject to subsequent ratification by the local governing committee (and/or Trust Board if need be) as necessary.
- Act as a focal point and advocate for the local governing committee, liaising as necessary with any regulatory body, the local governing committee and those representing the wider community.

Specific Responsibilities

As the guardian of the local governing committee's effectiveness, the Chair has a specific responsibility to ensure:

- That reporting by the academy headteacher is clear, concise, appropriate and comprehensive, reducing unnecessary paperwork.
- That meetings of the local governing committee are held regularly and there is a clear agenda which has been communicated to all Governors which focusses appropriately on strategic matters, acknowledging that when urgent meetings are required to discuss exceptional business that as much preparation as may be possible is made for these.
- That the business of the local governing committee is conducted as openly and transparently as possible.
- That decisions taken by the local governing committee are implemented and not circumvented.
- That Governors adhere to the Governor Code of Conduct and that appropriate and firm action is taken where this appears not to be the case, including supporting the Trust Chair when removal of a Governor is required.
- That the local governing committee undertakes regular reviews of any skills gaps or lack of experience and/or capacity and takes active steps to address these.
- That the local governing committee remains focused on its strategic purpose and that individual Governors either as a group or committee or as individuals do not seek to become overly involved in operational matters or seek to disrupt the work of the Trust.
- There is proper and adequate succession planning.
- That any complaints about the Trust or the Academy, the actions of the local governing committee or an individual Governor or the headteacher are dealt with in a timely and effective manner.
- That any complaints about the Trust or the Academy, the actions of the local governing committee or an individual Governor or the headteacher are dealt with in a timely and effective manner in line with the relevant policy.

Additional Skills

As well as the skills required of a Governor, the Chair should be able to demonstrate the following attributes:

- An understanding of the framework within which corporate bodies function.
- Strong communication skills.
- Ability to prioritise and delegate.
- Ability to chair meetings and encourage the participation of others, including mediate.
- Ability to build and lead a team.
- Leadership or managerial experience.

Appendix A

Responsibility, Accountability, Consultation, Information (RACI) Chart

Key

R = The primary body responsible for the completion of the task

C = The primary body must consult with this body before completing the task

I = The primary body must inform this body once the task has been complete

A = The primary body must get formal approval for this task from this individual/organisation before it can be complete

Ref	Task	Catholic Education Trust	Diocesan Director of Education	Diocesan Department for Education	Bishop of Hexham & Newcastle (or Diocesan Director)
	Governance and Management				
1	Appointing Foundation Directors under Article 50 (who must be in the majority by at least 2)	C	C	C	R
2	Recruiting and Appointing Directors under Article 50A (i.e. by the MAT Trust Board)	R	A	C	I
3	Recruiting and appointing reserve posts	R		C	
4	Religious Designation	A		C	R
5	Vision and Values	R	C	I	A
6	Strategy, Expansion and Leadership	R		C	
7	Strategic Organisation/ Delegated Responsibilities	R		C	
8	Statutory Policies	R		I	

9	Risk Management Reviews	R	I	I	
10	Recruitment of non-reserve posts	R			
11	Staff Performance Management process	R			
12	Staff Professional Development	R			
13	Compliance with MOU	R	R	C	I
14	ESFA Returns	R			
15	DfE intervention	R	C	C	
16	DfE/ESFA approvals for significant changes (as per Diocesan Guidance)	R	C	I	A
17	Due Diligence of schools joining the MAT	R	C	C	
	Education Achievements				
18	Admissions Policy	R		C	
19	Educational Standards	R	I	I	
	Business Management				
20	Statutory Compliances (including Health and Safety)	R	I		
21	Compliance with Academy Trust Handbook	R	I		
22	Business Administration & Organisation	R			
23	Business Plan and Annual Budget Setting	R	I		
24	Estate Strategy/Capital Works	R	C	C	A

25	Pay and conditions of senior staff	R			
26	Insurance/Risk Protection Cover	R		I	A

Appendix B

Seven Principles of Public Life

These are:

Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other benefits for themselves, their family or their friends.

Integrity

Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their official duties.

Objectivity

In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

Openness

Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

Honesty

Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

Leadership

Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.



Bishop Wilkinson
Catholic Education Trust

Employee Code of Conduct

Purpose

This document sets out the Trust's Code of Conduct for its employees. The purpose of this code is to assist employees to achieve the required standards by setting out clearly what is required.

Document Control

Implementation date	September 2021
Author	Human Resources
Review date	September 2022

1. Introduction

1.1 The public are entitled to expect the highest standards of conduct from all our employees.

1.2 The aim of this Code is to:

- Make a clear statement about the standards of conduct expected of employees of the Trust;
- Ensure the highest standards of conduct by identifying Trust standards which sit alongside professional codes and guidelines;
- Help all employees to act in a way which upholds the Trust standards and at the same time, protect them from criticism, misunderstanding or complaint; and
- To help build trust between the Trust and the people who come into contact with those working for it.

1.3 The Trust's values, as set out below, support this Code by providing further guidance in relation to how employees need to conduct themselves in the workplace.

- **Develop spirituality**

We believe that a knowledge of and a personal relationship with Christ brings meaning and direction to life.

- **Act with justice, respect and dignity**

We believe that every member of our diverse community is created in God's image and therefore we act with respect and show dignity, ensuring that all are treated with fairness, justice and equity. We work fervently to dispel inequality and pay special attention to those most in need.

- **Foster a sense of vocation**

We believe that all members of our Trust should be supported to recognise their own purpose and to develop a sense of how they are called to contribute to society.

- **Promote educational excellence**

We believe that each person should be equipped to excel through the highest quality learning opportunities and richest wider-school experiences.

- **Form high aspirations**

We believe that every member of our Trust community should have the highest expectations of themselves and others and should be equipped with the knowledge and skills to achieve greatly.

- **Celebrate community**

We believe that our schools promote truth, honesty, reconciliation, resilience and integrity in their own context, but together create strength, optimism and excellence across the Trust.

- **Support exceptional leadership**

We believe that the best leadership in Catholic Schools raises the work of the staff and the attainment of young people to levels that exceed expectations through relentless focus, effective management skills, profound empathy, sustained energy and robust optimism, underpinned by wide professional knowledge founded on innovative research.

- 1.4 In addition to the values, schools within our Trust have policies, procedures, and guidelines which should be read in conjunction with this Code. Further information is also available in the Employee Handbook.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This Code applies to all Trust employees and volunteers. The term employee is used throughout the Code but should be taken to refer to both employees and volunteers as appropriate.
- 2.2 Employees are required to read this Code and clarify any questions they may have with their headteacher or manager. All employees will be supplied with a copy of this Code, which they are expected to read, sign and follow. Please note that a breach of the standards as set out in this Code will be dealt with through the Disciplinary and/or Capability Procedure and could result in formal action up to and including dismissal.

3. General Principles

- 3.1 All employees of the Trust are expected to give the highest possible standard of service to pupils, members of the public, Governors, Directors and fellow employees at all time.
- 3.2 The attitude of employees in dealing with people reflects on the Trust so it is important that they are helpful, polite and courteous. People's impression of the Trust is strongly influenced by the views of the people who work for it. Whether or not employees are aware of it, others will accept the comments they make. Employees, therefore, need to consider carefully the effect of what they say.
- 3.3 All employees are expected to report to their headteacher or manager as soon as possible any perceived or anticipated impropriety, breach of procedure or policy of the Trust. Information on whistleblowing is also available from your place of work.
- 3.4 It is not enough for employees to avoid a breach of this Code. At all times, employees must act in such a way to avoid any occasion for suspicion and any appearance of improper conduct. This includes activities both in and outside of the normal place of work and includes work related functions e.g. leaving celebrations. It also includes occasions outside of work where an employee makes themselves identifiable as an employee of the Trust e.g. social media, wearing an ID badge.

4. The Principles

- 4.1 There are a number of principles that exemplify the required standards. They are set out below. A number of these aspects are dealt with in more detail within this Code.

Honesty, Integrity, Impartiality and Objectivity

All employees must perform their duties with honesty, integrity, impartiality and objectivity.

Accountability

All employees must be accountable to the Trust for their actions.

Respect for Others

All employees must:

- Treat others with dignity and respect
- Not discriminate unlawfully against any person
- Treat others professionally

Stewardship

All employees must:

- Use any Trust funds in a responsible and lawful manner, and should refer to the appropriate Trust financial procedures and policies
- Not make personal use of property or facilities of the Trust unless properly authorised to do so

Personal Interests

All employees must not in their official or personal capacity:

- Allow their personal interests to conflict with the Trust's requirements
- Use their position improperly to confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person

Declaring Interests

All employees must comply with any of the Trust requirements:

- To declare interests
- To declare hospitality, benefits or gifts received as a consequence of their employment

Openness

All employees must not:

- Disclose information given to them in confidence by anyone, or information acquired which they believe is of a confidential nature, without the consent of a person authorised to give it, or unless they are required by law to do so
- Prevent another person from gaining access to information which that person is entitled to by law

Duty of the Trust

All employees must at all times act in accordance with the Trust that pupils/parents/carers and the public is entitled to place in them.

Safeguarding

All employees must undertake their work in accordance with requirements laid down (for their job) in support of the Trust's duties for safeguarding children and young people. All staff should adhere to and comply with the Trust's policies and procedures for safeguarding.

5. Confidentiality and Disclosure of Information

- 5.1 The Trust recognises the importance of an open, transparent culture with clear communication and accountability. It is the Trust's aim to be as open as possible about all of its activities. The law requires that certain types of information must be available to auditors, government departments, service users and the public. Different rules apply in different situations. If an employee is in any doubt as to whether they can release any particular information, they should always check with their headteacher/manager first.
- 5.2 The confidentiality of information received in the course of an employee's duties should be respected and must never be used for personal or political gain or benefit. Employees must not knowingly pass information on to others who might use it in such a way. If an employee believes that information should be disclosed in the public interest, they should follow the Whistleblowing Policy before doing so (see section 6).
- 5.3 Personal data obtained in the course of employment should always be treated confidentially and only be disclosed in accordance with data protection legislation, or other legal, or Trust requirements.
- 5.4 Information given in the course of an employee's duties should be accurate and fair and never designed to mislead.

6. Whistleblowing

- 6.1 Employees are often the first to realise that there may be something seriously wrong within the Trust. However, they might not express their concerns because they feel that speaking up would be disloyal to their colleagues. They might also fear harassment or victimisation. In these circumstances, some staff may find it easier to ignore the concern rather than report what may just be a suspicion of malpractice. However, the Trust is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability. In line with that commitment employees, and those associated with the Trust, who have serious concerns about any aspect of the Trust's work are expected to come forward and voice those concerns. They can raise these concerns through the Whistleblowing Policy which is available from your place of work.

7. Political Neutrality

- 7.1 Employees must not allow their own personal or political opinions to interfere with their work or their behaviour at work and must at all times perform their duties in an objective manner with no reference to their political preferences verbally or written.

8. Relationships at Work

- 8.1 It is important that all working relationships, and relationships between employees and pupils, are conducted in a professional manner.

- 8.2 It is an abuse of the professional relationship between an employee and pupil for the employee to:

- Enter into an improper association with a pupil, either inside or outside of the workplace, e.g. school trips, or when using social media (Facebook, Twitter etc);
- Commit any acts against a pupil which are illegal;
- Show undue personal favour or disfavour towards a pupil; or
- Endeavour to exert an undue influence on personal attitudes, opinions or behaviour which are in no way connected with the work of the Trust.

- 8.3 Employees must declare to their headteacher or manager any situation where their impartiality, objectivity or honesty may be compromised due to them being related to or having a close personal relationship with a colleague who they work with.

9. Safeguarding of Pupils/Students

- 9.1 Employees have a duty to safeguard pupils from:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Neglect

- 9.2 The duty to safeguard pupils includes the duty to report concerns about a pupil to the Designated Lead for Child Protection/Safeguarding. Employees must ensure that they are familiar with the Child Protection/Safeguarding Policy and Whistleblowing procedures.

10. Recruitment and Selection and Other Employment Matters

- 10.1 Recruitment and selection decisions must be made in accordance with the Trust's policies and procedures, and regulations on safer recruitment.

- 10.2 To avoid accusations of bias, employees must not be involved in recruitment and selection processes where they are related to or have a close personal relationship with an applicant.

- 10.3 Headteachers, Deputy Headteachers and Directors are required to disclose to the Chief Executive Officer any relationship known to exist between them and any person they know is a candidate for an appointment with the Trust.
- 10.4 Employees should not be involved in other employment related decisions for employees who are a relative or with whom they have a close personal relationship, nor should they attempt to influence such decisions. This includes decisions on matters such as discipline, promotions or pay adjustments.

11. The Local Community and Service Users

- 11.1 Employees should always remember their responsibilities to the community and ensure courteous, impartial and efficient service delivery to all groups and individuals in that community in accordance with the policies of the Trust. Employees should not be expected to place their personal health, safety and welfare at risk.

12. Contractors / Suppliers / Procurement / Tendering

- 12.1 Orders and contracts must be awarded in accordance with contracting procedures and rules and all relationships of a business or personal nature with external contractors or suppliers must be declared to the headteacher or manager at the earliest opportunity.

13. Outside Commitments

- 13.1 The Trust recognises that employees are entitled to their private lives. Employees must not allow their personal interests to conflict with or be detrimental to their duties or Trust business. An employee must not be in a position where their outside commitments presents a conflict of interest, e.g. exam marking. Staff are expected to conduct themselves with integrity, impartiality and honesty and their private interests should not be such as to have the potential for allegations of impropriety to be sustained thereby bringing the Trust into disrepute.
- 13.2 Employees must not engage in any other business without the agreement of their headteacher/manager.

14. Conduct

- 14.1 Whether in or outside work, employees must not conduct themselves in any way that creates doubt as to their suitability for their post or brings the Trust into disrepute. This includes conduct which would bring into question their suitability to work with children.
- 14.2 All employees working with children and young people have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in their ability to safeguard the welfare and best interests of children and young people. It is therefore expected that they will adopt high standards of personal conduct in order to maintain the confidence

and respect of parents/carers, the public in general and all those with whom they work.

15. Dress and Appearance

- 15.1 An employee's dress and appearance are matters of personal choice and self-expression. However, employees should consider the manner of dress and appearance appropriate to their role which may be different to that adopted in their personal life.
- 15.2 Employees who work with pupils should ensure they are dressed decently, safely and appropriately for the tasks they undertake. Those who dress or appear in a manner which could be considered as inappropriate could render themselves vulnerable to criticism or allegations.
- 15.3 This means employees should wear clothing which:
- Is appropriate for their role
 - Is not likely to be viewed as offensive, revealing, or sexually provocative
 - Does not distract, cause embarrassment or give rise to misunderstanding
 - Is absent of any political or otherwise contentious slogans
 - Is not considered to be discriminatory

16. Additional Work

- 16.1 Employees are able to take on work in addition to their existing contract of employment, providing it does not conflict with the performance of their duties in the role for which they are employed. In order to assess whether or not there might be a conflict, employees are required to inform their headteacher/manager before taking any outside employment.
- 16.2 The Trust will not unreasonably stop employees from undertaking additional employment, but this employment must not, in the Trust, conflict with or be detrimental to its interests, or weaken public confidence in the conduct of its business.
- 16.3 An employee who wishes to take on additional work must ensure that:
- The additional hours worked do not contravene the Working Time Regulations or otherwise give the Trust cause for concern about health and safety at work
 - The outside work does not place the employee in a position where their duties and private interests conflict
 - The outside work does not damage, or potentially damage, public confidence in the Trust's conduct or business

17. Books, Training Materials and Intellectual Property Rights

- 17.1 If an employee writes a book for payment on subjects relating to their work for the Trust they must seek the permission of the Trust in writing through their headteacher/line manager and comply with copyright legislation.
- 17.2 The Trust retains intellectual property rights for work undertaken by employees. Research, reports, designs, drawings, software and other developments or similar work, when created in the course of an employee's normal duties, remain the property of the Trust. These should not be removed from Trust's premises or passed on to third parties by any employee acting in a private capacity without the express consent of their headteacher or manager.

18. Patents and Inventions

- 18.1 Any matter, or object capable of being patented under the Patents Act 1977, made, developed or discovered by an employee, either alone or with others, whilst in the performance of their duties should be disclosed to the Trust through the headteacher or their manager. Subject to the provisions of the Patents Act, it will belong to and be the absolute property of the Trust.
- 18.2 Employees must not undertake private or personal work, paid or unpaid, of any description in working hours or on the Trust's premises unless their headteacher/manager has given them specific permission.

19. Information Technology

- 19.1 The Trust wants employees to use computers/IT to the full and to feel competent and comfortable about doing so. However, it is essential that computers/IT are used appropriately. Any reference to computers should be taken to mean all computer equipment and any associated technology.
- 19.2 All employees should follow and comply with the Trust's policies and procedures relating to ICT.
- 19.3 An employee who is aware or suspects that abuse of computers, email or the internet is taking place is under a duty to report this immediately to their headteacher or manager.
- 19.4 The Trust will monitor the use of computers/IT etc. without notice in accordance with the Trust's ICT policies and procedures. A record of any sites accessed by staff is automatically stored on the system and may be examined later if misuse is suspected.

20. Social Media

- 20.1 All employees must familiarise themselves with, and adhere to, the Trust's Social Media Policy.
- 20.2 Employees should ensure that the content of their blogs/social networking sites do not bring the Trust into disrepute or breach their obligations in relation to confidentiality, professional standards and appropriate behaviour.

20.3 Employees must not:

- Disclose any information that is confidential to the Trust or any third party or disclose personal data of information about any individual/colleague/student/parent/carer which could be in breach of the data protection legislation;
- Disclose any information which is not yet in the public arena;
- Post illegal material, e.g. material which incites racial or religious hatred;
- Link their own blogs/personal web pages to the Trust's website;
- Include any information, sourced from the Trust, which breaches copyright;
- Make any remarks, unless directed to do so by the Trust, about the Trust, colleagues, Governors, Directors, pupils, parents/carers;
- Publish any material or comment that could undermine public confidence in the individual as an employee of the Trust or in their position within the community; and/or
- Misrepresent the Trust by posting false or inaccurate statements about the work of the Trust.

21. Personal Interests

- 21.1 All employees must declare to their headteacher/manager using the Employee Code of Conduct form any financial or non-financial interests which they consider could bring about conflict with the Trust's interests.
- 21.2 If employees are in any doubt about a potential conflict of interest, they should bring the matter to the attention of their headteacher or manager so that a decision can be made as how best to proceed.
- 21.3 Employees must not make, or become involved with, any official or professional decisions about matters in which they have a personal interest.

22. Equality

- 22.1 Everyone has a right to be treated with fairness and equity. Employees should become familiar with and observe all Trust policies on equality and diversity.

23. Tender Procedures

- 23.1 Employees should exercise fairness and impartiality when dealing with all customers, contractors and subcontractors, and adhere to the Trust's policies and procedures.
- 23.2 Employees responsible for engaging or supervising contractors and who have previously had, or currently have, a relationship in a private or domestic capacity with a particular contractor, must declare that relationship to their headteacher or manager.

- 23.3 If employees become privy to confidential information on tenders or costs relating to external contractors, they must not disclose that information to any unauthorised person or organisation.
- 23.4 All employees must ensure that no special favour is shown to current, or recent former, employees or their partners, close relatives or associates in awarding contracts to businesses run by them or employing them in any capacity.
- 23.5 Employees must not buy items for personal use using the Trust contracts with external contractors.

24. Gifts and hospitality

- 24.1 Employees may from time to time, in the course of their work, encounter situations where individuals, including pupils, or organisations may offer gifts, money, awards, prizes, hospitality or other benefits.
- 24.2 Casual gifts offered to employees by contractors, organisations, firms, parents/carers or individuals such as calendars, diaries, pens, food, drink, flowers and other small gifts below (or perceived to be below) the value of £50 can be accepted.
- 24.3 Employees should notify their headteacher/manager of any gifts with a value (or perceived value) of £50 and over. It is recognised that gifts are common custom and practice, particularly in schools at the end of the academic year and at Christmas, and that quite often gifts of a higher value may be received on behalf of a number of students within a class, which is considered acceptable practice.
- 24.4 When a gift needs to be refused, this should be done with tact and courtesy.
- 24.5 Employees who corruptly receive or give gifts, money, awards, prizes, hospitality or other benefits will face disciplinary action.
- 24.6 When giving gifts on behalf of the Trust, employees should aim to ensure that the value of the gift is reasonable, is within the Scheme of Delegation of financial powers, the decision is fully documented, and has due regard to propriety and regularity in the use of public funds.
- 24.7 Employees need to exercise discretion when accepting offers of hospitality particularly when the host is seeking to do business with the Trust or who may stand to benefit in some way from dealing with the Trust.
- 24.8 Offers of hospitality should only be accepted where there is a clear benefit to the Trust in doing so e.g. networking, building contacts. If there is no or limited benefit, employees should not attend.
- 24.9 Hospitality offered by charitable or social organisations, usually in connection with an invitation to speak to the body, can be accepted. Employees should

report to their headteacher or manager any offer of hospitality before it is accepted.

- 24.10 A Gifts and Hospitality checklist is provided at Appendix A and a sample form to record any gifts and hospitality is provided at Appendix B.

25. Corruption

- 25.1 Employees must be aware that bribing another person or receiving a bribe are serious criminal offences under the Bribery Act. Penalties include fines and / or imprisonment for up to 10 years.
- 25.2 The offence of 'bribing another person' will be committed if an employee offers, promises or gives financial or other advantage to another person with the aim of inducing or rewarding them perform an activity or function improperly. The activity or function could relate to an external business or commercial activity or any public function (for instance done in house or by another public sector body).
- 25.3 For employee's own protection, if anyone makes an approach which seems to them, or might seem to a third party, to be aimed at obtaining some form of preferential treatment, or in any suspicious circumstances in connection with a contract, this should be reported to the headteacher or their manager.

26. Financial Resources

- 26.1 Employees must ensure that they use public funds entrusted to them in a responsible and lawful manner. Employees should always strive to ensure value for money.
- 26.2 To support employees involved in financial activities and transactions including budgetary control, operation of bank accounts, payments of accounts, payments of salaries and wages, petty cash and orders of works, goods or services the Trust has developed financial rules and procedures.

27. Sponsorship

- 27.1 Where an outside organisation wishes to sponsor a Trust activity or project, whether by invitation, tender, negotiation or voluntarily, the basic principles concerning the acceptance of gifts and hospitality apply. They should only be accepted where the hospitality involved is on a scale appropriate to the circumstances, reasonably incidental to the occasion and not extravagant.

28. Contact with the press and media

- 28.1 Employees are not permitted to give reports or speak to the press and media, unless this is an aspect which is clearly required within their role, or they have been given permission to do so by the Trust's Chief Executive Officer on matters relating to their employment within the Trust. Employees with this responsibility must guard themselves against declaring a view which is contrary

to a position taken by the Trust and which may be deemed to be critical of that decision.

28.2 Outside of working hours, an employee is entitled to voice their opinion on issues affecting the local community e.g. at a neighbourhood forum. However, employees have a general duty of care to avoid a conflict of interest and should not criticise, damage or act in any way against the Trust, and make it clear they are not speaking on behalf of the Trust.

28.3 A Trade Union official or member may be asked to comment by the media on, for instance, an industrial dispute. Any opinion expressed should be clearly given in their capacity as a Trade Union official or member.

29. Talks to outside bodies, radio and television interviews, contributions to publications, etc.

29.1 Where an employee is invited to give a talk to an outside body, or participate in a broadcast, or contribute an article to a professional journal, or the like, on a matter related to their employment or on a personal interest which would be relevant to that employment, the following guidelines apply:

- Acceptance of such an invitation shall be at the discretion of the Headteacher. In the event of a headteacher wishing to follow this course of action, it shall be at the discretion of the Chief Executive Officer and, in the event of the Chief Executive Officer wishing to follow this course of action, the Chair of the Trust Board
- Unless an employee is officially representing the Trust, they should make it clear that they are speaking or contributing on a personal basis and that their views do not necessarily represent those of the Trust
- Employees should avoid commenting on matters which could be regarded as contentious or sensitive so far as the Trust is concerned, especially in cases where what is said is being reported.

29.2 Provided that an employee gives talks on relatively isolated occasions, they shall, at the discretion of their Headteacher or manager be permitted:

- To retain any fee received (on the assumption that any preparatory work will have been undertaken in the employee's own time), and
- To be absent for the purpose of giving the talk, interview etc., without the necessity of taking annual leave, if the invitation entails being absent during working hours, providing the absence from work is reasonable and does not adversely impact on the delivery of education / their work.

29.3 When an employee wishes to undertake paid lecturing on a regular basis additional to their employment with the Trust, they should follow the same procedure of that specified for undertaking additional work.

30. Smoking and Vaping

- 30.1 It is the policy of the Trust that all of our workplace buildings are smoke- free, and all employees have the right to work in a smoke-free environment. Smoking and vaping are prohibited in all enclosed areas and/or non-designated areas without exception. This includes common work areas, auditoriums, classrooms, conference and meeting rooms, private offices, elevators, hallways, cafeterias, staff rooms, stairs, restrooms, Trust-owned or leased vehicles and all other enclosed facilities. Failure to adhere to this may result in disciplinary action being taken.

31. Drug and Alcohol Misuse

- 31.1 It is the responsibility of all employees to report to work fit for duty without impairment from alcohol and/or illegal drugs.
- 31.2 It is a disciplinary offence for employees to consume alcohol and/or use illegal drugs during working hours or whilst on duty.
- 31.3 Any employee representing the Trust at official functions/meetings, whether within the working day or when attending evening seminars, meetings, etc. are reminded of the need to maintain appropriate standards of conduct at all times.
- 31.4 Where there is a belief that an employee is under the influence of alcohol and/or illegal drugs, the headteacher/manager will ensure that the employee is escorted home safely and make arrangements to interview them on the next working day, or as soon as possible afterwards.

32. Notification of criminal investigations and other required disclosures

- 32.1 The Code places a general obligation on all employees to disclose information which is relevant to their capability, capacity and suitability to carry out the duties and responsibilities for which they are employed. This general obligation applies irrespective of the role undertaken by the employee and is not limited to information which relates to a conviction, caution, reprimand or warning.
- 32.2 For employees undertaking roles for which a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check is required there is a specific obligation on them to disclose any convictions, cautions, reprimands or warnings that they receive which are relevant to their employment.
- 32.3 For the avoidance of doubt an employee must immediately inform their headteacher/manager, if during their employment with the Trust they are:
- Included on the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Children's Barred List;
 - Disqualified from working with children under The Childcare (Disqualification) and Childcare (Early Years Provision Free of Charge) (Extended Entitlement) (Amendment) Regulations 2018 (See Appendix D)
 - Advised that they are under investigation for a criminal act (including road traffic offences)

- Arrested in connection with a criminal act
- Notified that criminal charges are being considered against them
- In receipt of a summons to appear before a Court of Law for an alleged offence
- Found guilty and convicted of any offence
- Receive a police caution
- Are involved in any other matter which it would be reasonable to think would impact upon their role and or professional standing
- Employees who are required to drive as part of their duties must also declare any driving convictions.

Failure to disclose this information may be treated as a disciplinary offence.

- 32.3 The headteacher/manager will consider any possible effects of these matters on an individual's employment, discuss this with HR as appropriate and take relevant action.
- 32.4 After having undertaken a risk assessment and taking advice as appropriate the headteacher/manager will put in place precautionary measures for the protection of the employee, pupils/students and the Trust. Precautionary action may include restriction of duties, temporary redeployment, temporary change of work base or, if none of these options are practicable, suspension with pay. The headteacher/manager is responsible for consulting with authorised officers/legal/HR as appropriate and taking relevant action.
- 32.5 Following careful consideration of the available evidence, any action taken will be fair and reasonable in the circumstances.

GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY

Checklist for considering whether to accept a gift or hospitality

The question in all cases is one of judgement, and the following checklist of queries should help employees to decide whether a gift or an offer of hospitality should be accepted or declined.

- (a) Is the value of the gift or hospitality £50 or over?
- (b) If under £50 is it intended as an inducement?
- (c) Is the extent of the hospitality, or nature of the gift reasonable and appropriate?
- (d) Does the donor have any form of contractual relationship with the Trust does it provide goods or services to the Trust of any kind?
- (e) Is the invitation/gift directed to a large group of unrelated individuals or open to the public, or has an individual been targeted because of their employment with the Trust and the nature of their role?
- (f) What is thought to be the motivation behind the invitation/gift?
- (g) For hospitality does the employee wish to attend if so why? Is it because there will be genuine benefits to the Trust in terms of networking and contracts gained? Or is a desire to go centred around personal enjoyment.
- (h) Would acceptance of the invitation be, in any way, inappropriate or place the employee under pressure in relation to any current or future matter involving the Trust?
- (i) For gifts is there a difficulty in returning the gift? If it would cause offence can the gift be given to charity?

If an employee decides to accept a gift over £50 they must declare this to their Head Teacher. If an employee declines a gift of over £50 the Head Teacher should also be informed and the reasons for the gift being declined should be recorded.

RECORD OF GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY

Date received	Detail of gift/hospitality	Person who received gift/hospitality	Gift/hospitality given by e.g. name and/or company	Reason for gift/hospitality e.g. as part of promotion	Destination of gift e.g. returned, used in raffle, etc.	Authorising signature

Disqualification Under the Childcare Act 2006 – Amended Regulations

The government is introducing new legislation (The Childcare (Disqualification) and Childcare (Early Years Provision Free of Charge) (Extended Entitlement) (Amendment) Regulations 2018.)

The arrangements set out in the guidance are **additional** to the arrangements in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children set out in:

- Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>;
- Statutory framework for early years foundation stage (EYFS) - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2>; and
- Working together to safeguard children - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>.

There are a number of reasons that a person may be disqualified from working with children under the Childcare Act 2006. Staff can be disqualified by

- inclusion on the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Children's Barred List;
- being found to have committed certain violent and sexual criminal offences against children and adults which are referred to in regulation 4 and Schedules 2 and 3 of the 2018 Regulations (note that regulation 4 also refers to offences that are listed in other pieces of legislation);
- certain orders made in relation to the care of children which are referred to in regulation 4 and listed at Schedule 1 of the 2018 Regulations;
- refusal or cancellation of registration relating to childcare, or children's homes, or being prohibited from private fostering, as specified in Schedule 1 of the 2018 Regulations;
- being found to have committed an offence overseas, which would constitute an offence regarding disqualification under the 2018 Regulations if it had been done in any part of the United Kingdom.

Also, under the legislation a person is disqualified if they are 'found to have committed' an offence which is included in the 2018 Regulations (a 'relevant offence') this includes:

- being convicted of a relevant offence;
- on or after 6 April 2007, being given a caution for a relevant offence; or
- on or after 8 April 2013, given a youth caution for a relevant offence.

The new legislation also makes other changes in some of the relevant offences. The **new offences** added to the list since the June 2016 guidance are:

- Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2015 – including care workers ill-treating or wilfully neglecting an individual
- Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 – including conducting FGM and assisting a girl to conduct FGM on herself
- Modern Slavery Act 2015 – including holding a person in slavery or servitude and requiring a person to perform forced or compulsory labour
- Psychoactive Substances Act 2016 – supplying or offering to supply a psychoactive substance to a child
- Serious Crime Act 2015 – possessing a paedophile manual and engaging in controlling or coercive behaviour in an intimate or family relationship

- Terrorism Act 2000 – including belonging to a proscribed organisation and committing an act of terrorism
- Terrorism Act 2006 – including encouraging terrorism, circulating a terrorist publication and directing a terrorist organization

If an individual is disqualified under the act they can apply for a waiver from Ofsted.

Staff covered

Staff are covered under the above legislation if they are employed or engaged to provide **early years childcare** (this covers the age range from birth until 1 September following a child's fifth birthday i.e. up to and including reception year) or **later years childcare** (this covers children above reception age but who have not attained the age of 8) in nursery, primary or settings, **or if they are directly concerned with the management of such childcare**. This includes:

Early years provision - staff who provide any care for a child up to and including reception age. This includes education in nursery and reception classes and/or any supervised activity (such as breakfast clubs, lunchtime supervision and after school care provided by the school) both during the normal school day and outside of school hours for children in the early years age range; and

Later years provision (for children under 8) - staff who are employed to work in childcare provided by the school outside of the normal school day for children who are above reception age but who have not attained the age of 8. This does not include education or supervised activity for children above reception age during school hours (including extended school hours for co-curricular learning activities, such as the school's choir or sports teams) but it does include before school settings, such as breakfast clubs, and after school provision.

Staff who are directly concerned in the management of early or later years provision are covered by the legislation. Schools/academies will need to use their judgement to determine who is covered, but this will include the headteacher, and may also include other members of the school's leadership team and any manager, supervisor, leader or volunteer responsible for the day-to-day management of the provision.

Volunteers and casual workers (including individuals on work experience) who are directly concerned with the management of childcare provision, and/or who work on a regular basis, whether supervised or not, in relevant childcare, are within the scope of the legislation and are covered by this guidance.

Staff who may be covered

Staff who are not employed to directly provide childcare, are not covered by the legislation. Similarly, most staff who are only occasionally deployed and are not regularly required to work in relevant childcare will not automatically come within the scope of the legislation. Schools/academies should exercise their judgement about when and whether such staff are within scope, evaluating and recording any risks and control measures put in place, and taking advice from their HR provider, the authority's designated officer, safeguarding lead officer or adviser when appropriate. A record of the assessment should be retained on the employee's personnel file and a copy supplied to the individual concerned. In general individuals undertaking the following roles would normally be excluded:

- caretakers;
- cleaners;
- drivers;
- transport escorts;
- catering; and
- office staff.

School governors and proprietors are not covered by the legislation, unless they volunteer to work in relevant childcare on a regular basis, or they are directly concerned with the day-to-day management of such provision. Further guidance on the safeguarding arrangements covering governors and the safeguarding responsibilities of governing bodies and proprietors is provided in KCSIE. Additionally it should be noted that, whilst out of scope of these regulations, school governors in maintained schools are also subject to additional arrangements and can also be disqualified from holding office (i.e. being a governor in maintained schools) under regulation 17, schedule 4 of the School Governance (Constitution) (England) Regulations 2012.

Staff not covered

This means that staff employed who work in the following roles are not covered, i.e. staff who:

- only provide education, childcare or supervised activity during school hours to children above reception age; or
- only provide childcare or supervised activities out of school hours for children who are aged 8 or over; and
- have no involvement in the management of relevant provision.

Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle template Scheme of Delegation. Draft developed for Catholic schools by the Diocesan Department for Education with the support of the Diocesan solicitors, Winckworth Sherwood (contact: Andrea Squires on asquires@wslaw.co.uk or 020 7593 5039). Any significant departures from this template should be discussed with the Director of Education.