

Terms of Reference – School Partnership Forum

1. Preamble

- 1.1. The board of directors (the Board) of The Leaf Trust (the Trust) are ultimately accountable for ensuring each school with the Trust delivers high quality education in a safe, effective manner and that public funds received for this purpose are stewarded appropriately.
- 1.2. To achieve that, it has delegated responsibility to School Governor Forums (SGF) for driving educational improvement via the **monitoring and evaluation of educational performance** against the School Development Plan (SDP), **provision of challenge to hold school leaders to account** for the quality of education as well as support and praise; ethos; pupil outcomes; wellbeing; stakeholder engagement and regulatory compliance i.e. safeguarding, H&S, SEND. In a Church School, this includes promoting and evaluating the distinctive Christian vision and ethos, enabling all to flourish.
- 1.3. The trust considers the role of each SGF vital in maintaining effective oversight of educational performance and ensuring the interests of children are considered.

2. Membership

- 2.1. Each School Governor Forum shall have a minimum of 8 members (SGF Members) of the number and types of member set out in this table:

Composition of School Governor Forums			
Type of Trust Governor	Number of Governors	Term of Office	How they are appointed
Headteacher or Executive Headteacher	1	Indefinite	Ex-officio (this post is not counted in the 8 minimum governance requirement)
Parent Governor	2 (4 in a federation)	4 years	Parent governors shall be appointed or elected by the school. (Where a federation is in place, two parent governors can be elected from both schools)

Composition of School Governor Forums			
Type of Trust Governor	Number of Governors	Term of Office	How they are appointed
Staff Governor	1	4 years	The school staff team shall elect staff governors.
Co-opted Governors	5 (3 Church)	4 years	The school appoints Co-opted Governors in partnership with the Trust Board.
Foundation Trust Governor (church schools Only)	2	4 years	Appointed by the Trust Board with the consent of the Diocese as Foundation Governors in a Church School.

- 2.2. The SGF may invite attendance at meetings from persons who are not Directors or SGF Members to assist or advise on a particular matter or range of issues. Such persons may speak with the permission of the Chair but shall not be entitled to vote.
- 2.3. Directors are entitled to attend and vote in any SGF meeting and be counted in the quorum.
- 2.4. The Head is to attend SGF meetings as an ex-officio governor, lead professional, and reports as the responsible officer for education.
- 2.5. Each School Governor Forum is supported by a clerk, known as The Trust Clerk. New Trust Clerks are appointed by the Trust Board.

3. Remit and Responsibilities of a School Governor Forum

- 3.1. The School Governor Forum shall be responsible for the matters set out in the Schedule.
- 3.2. The authority delegated to the School Governor Forum shall be as set out in the Trust's Scheme of Delegation (SoD), the specific provisions of any trust-wide policy including financial procedures or minuted Board resolution.
- 3.3. The School Governor Forum is authorised to seek any appropriate information that it requires from any member of school staff and all school staff shall be directed to co-operate with any request made.
- 3.4. Governors are invited to school improvement meetings led by the Executive Team, headteacher &/or external adviser.
- 3.5. The SGF Chair is to promote a two-way flow of communication between the Trust Board and other committees.

4. Proceedings

- 4.1. At the first meeting each year, the SGF shall nominate a Chair of Governors (the Chair) for approval by the Trust Board. The nominee shall act as Interim Chair until their nomination has been accepted or declined by the Board.
- 4.2. SGF members shall appoint a Vice-Chair.
- 4.3. Every matter to be decided at a meeting of the School Governor Forum shall be taken by a vote of governors, with the Chair having a casting vote.
- 4.4. Agendas for meetings shall be constructed using such template(s) and item(s) as the Trust shall direct.
- 4.5. Members shall declare direct or indirect duties or personal interest (including but not limited to any personal financial interest) which conflicts or may conflict with their duties as Member of the School Governor Forum. Ongoing personal or business interests shall be recorded via a formal register and published.

5. Quorum and Meeting Frequency

- 5.1. The SGF shall meet formally at least once per half term, i.e., six times per year.
- 5.2. A member of the Trust Executive Team, or any three School Governor Forum members, can request that the Chair convene a meeting by giving no less than 10 days prior notice of the intended date.
- 5.3. A quorum is 50% (rounded up to a whole number) of the total number holding office at the date of the meeting including the Headteacher and Chair or their nominated proxy(s).
- 5.4. Members of the School Governor Forum shall be able to participate in meetings by telephone or video conference provided that such request shall be made at least 48 hours in advance and that Members of the SGF have access to the appropriate equipment.

6. Reporting

- 6.1. The Trust Clerk is to produce and circulate draft minutes of each meeting to the Chair, Headteacher, CEO and Trust Governance Professional within ten working days.
- 6.2. The Trust Clerk shall produce a summary document to accompany the minutes identifying:
 - (i) decisions made

- (ii) any items for the information of the Trust Board
- (iii) recommendations to the Trust Board including
- (iv) items for further discussion by the Trust Board

- 6.3. CEO and /or Trust Governance Professional will circulate the summary document to the Trust Board within 21 days of the meeting.
- 6.4. The School Governor Forum shall arrange for the production and delivery of such other reports or updates as requested by the Trust Board or Trust Executive Leaders from time to time.
- 6.5. The School Governor Forum shall conduct an annual review of its work and its remit and responsibilities and shall report the outcome and make recommendations to the Trust Board.

Schedule

Main Responsibilities of a School Governor Forum (see Scheme of Delegation for fuller details)

1. Champion the Trust's vision, values and ethos.
2. Adhere to relevant legislation and to Trust policies.
3. Champion the school's vision, values and ethos and, where appropriate, the distinctive Christian vision and ethos. Ensuring they align and promote the vision and values of the trust.
4. Contribute to Ofsted and SIAMs inspection meetings to identify school areas of strength and improvement.
5. Monitor and evaluate the curriculum's intent, implementation, and impact, particularly for the disadvantaged, including factors affecting readiness to learn, i.e., behaviour, attendance, and well-being.
6. Receive the school's draft budget and ensure the use of resources is aligned to the SDP targets and the spending plan is benchmarked.
7. Champion the schools and trust to parents/communities, including, where appropriate, promoting strong links with the parish to ensure the church is fully engaged in the Christian life of the school.
8. Monitor and evaluate the impact of the school's communication plan, ensuring it is aligned to the Trust's key messages and the school's identity and promotes the voice of parents, staff, and pupils.
9. Appoint designated governors to hold the portfolios of
 - Safeguarding and whistleblowing
 - Curriculum and standards
 - Inclusion and SEND
 - Community
 - Ethos and character
10. Triangulate internal education performance data with information from the Trust's school improvement Team and/or external education professionals and comparison with external data and national averages through pre-arranged and accompanied visits to the school.

11. Support the recruitment process of senior staff in line with the approved staffing structure and Headteacher appraisal.
12. Establish/convene any panels required, e.g., pay, exclusions, disciplinary, capability, complaints, and admissions.
13. Self-evaluate the quality, effectiveness and impact of SGF performance on the quality of education and pupil outcomes.
14. Ensure school compliance with statutory duties and report any area of concern or failure.
15. Adopt and comply with all Trust policies, protocols, and procedures. Adapt and approve local policies.
16. Support the Trust Board in evaluating the quality of the learning environment and professional service provision.