



Vanguard Learning Trust

Role description for a local governor

The role of a Vanguard Learning Trust (VLT or the Trust) governor is to:

- support and promote the school and VLT within the school community, as well as champion and contribute to the work of the Trust in developing and implementing its vision of outstanding, inclusive education;
- demonstrate collective responsibility through the oversight of the school, including by providing support to the other schools in the Trust as required;
- focus on safeguarding, the curriculum, educational provision and performance, community engagement, health and safety, as well as risk identification and management at the school;
- attend meetings of the local governing body (LGB) or board of trustees (BoT) (when required) and participate in panels for complaints, personnel or permanent exclusion cases when necessary; and
- act as a 'critical friend' to the headteacher and senior staff by knowing the school, supporting and challenging leaders' judgements in relation to the quality of education, including next steps after external assurance work, and the effectiveness of operational matters in relation to estates management, eg. risk assessments to ensure the school meets the needs of the pupils and families it serves.

This role description sets out the requirements to be a governor of a school in the Trust and applies to a single school or joint school LGB. It details the general, day-to-day requirements and key responsibilities of a governor.

Governors are expected to:

Be compliant

- Ensure compliance with the requirements of the articles of association and Department for Education (DfE) regarding eligibility as if they were a trustee, and remain eligible to be a school governor.
- Ensure that they are at all times compliant with the expectations for governors and the code of conduct for VLT trustees, members and governors.

Be prepared

- Build continuous knowledge of VLT and its schools, as well as trends and issues within education more generally.
- Understand the legal framework for VLT and its operations including familiarity with the articles of association, funding agreement, governance framework, scheme of delegation, and Ofsted inspection framework, seeking clarification where necessary.

Be an active participant

- Attend all required meetings and contribute positively, helping to clarify information and support informed decision-making.
- Read all papers for meetings in advance and ask questions that clarify points or enhance understanding, thereby supporting discussion of the options available and the decisions required.
- Speak, act, and vote in what they believe to be the best interests of the school(s) for which the LGB is responsible (while some governors are elected by parents, the responsibility of all governors is to the school(s) as a whole).

- Undertake training and development to improve knowledge and/or effectiveness.
- Undertake specific role(s) (such as link governor) and fulfil it/them diligently.

Act appropriately

- Work as part of the team and form effective relationships with trustees and other governors, as well as senior school leaders and Trust central team staff;
- Respect confidentiality of information and opinions as well as the need for trustees/governors to be able to have in-depth and private discussions;
- Respect all board of trustees/LGB decisions and support them in public;
- Act within the framework of the policies of the Trust and its legal obligations;
- Respect that operational management of the school is the responsibility of the headteacher and senior staff, recognising that the role of governors is to be strategic and hold the headteacher to account for delivery of that strategy and performance; and
- Understand that assessments of the quality of teaching, or the quality of individual staff is the role of the headteacher through teaching and learning and performance management processes.

Likely time commitment for governors

The time commitment for governors, besides those with specific roles, is likely to be:

- attendance at a LGB meeting every half-term, which is typically in the evening but could be early morning;
- attendance at board of trustees' committee/forum meetings as required by a link governor role;
- attendance at one half day governance day in November and one full day governance day in June;
- attendance at any necessary governor panels (such as for staff or pupil matters); and
- occasional attendance at school and Trust events for staff or pupils.

Person specification for governors

An effective governor will need to demonstrate a commitment to:

- securing the best educational outcomes for all children;
- the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of being a governor and adhering to Nolan's seven principles of public life (contained within the code of conduct);
- the vision, values and objectives of VLT and the school(s) overseen by the LGB;
- participate in training and self-evaluation; and
- develop an understanding of the role of a governor and gain experience of non-executive governance.

An effective governor will also need an ability to:

- evaluate and make use of a wide range of information and data, to question effectively in a manner that encourages reflection and helps move discussion forward;
- work as a member of a team; and
- respect confidentiality.

Other skills and attributes an effective governor will need are as follows:

- effective communication and interpersonal skills, both in person and via electronic communication (including email and video/audio conferencing);
- impartial and evidence-based decision making;
- the capacity to develop specific knowledge and understanding of the school and its community;
- a sense of fairness; and
- tact and diplomacy.

Key responsibilities of the local governing body

Areas of responsibility	Key LGB functions
Governance and risk	• Deliver governance oversight within remit set by BoT • Review school-level risk reports and monitor risk assessment processes and ensure actions are completed
Strategy, growth and stakeholder engagement	• Consider stakeholder feedback and ensure agreed actions are followed up
Educational provision and school improvement	• Approve curriculum and term dates including the school day • Review Trust-wide school improvement work • Review school scorecard • Approve school-level policies • Monitor progress with school targets
Safeguarding and student matters	• Conduct link visits for safeguarding • Attend safeguarding forum meetings • Convene and chair exclusion and complaint panels, and make decisions
HR/staffing	• Monitor vacancies, recruitment and involved in AHT/DHT recruitment • Agree teachers' pay progression for tier 2
Finance	• Receive management accounts • Receive a copy of draft budget • Ensure action is taken with assurance findings
Estates and IT (Estates)	• Provides input into local needs and approves minor capital works • Provides feedback on project impact • Ensures local compliance with health and safety policies • Ensures the school environment is well maintained • Reports local risks to the central team
Estates and IT (IT)	• Provides feedback on IT infrastructure's impact on the school • Monitors compliance with local data protection regulations • Provides input into the school's procurement needs