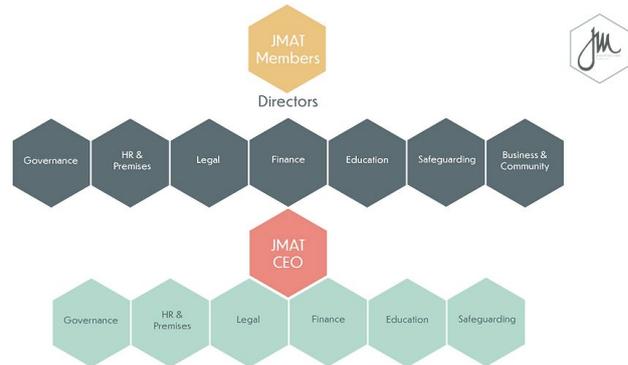




GOVERNANCE IN OUR ACADEMY TRUST

Expertise, support, challenge and advice

With our philosophy of maintaining each schools uniqueness we have provided a structure which enhances, challenges and supports the governing body of our schools to drive forward school improvement and educational outcomes, shaping life within their own school.



Our Trustees are specialists in their fields. They have committed to support the education of the children within our schools through ensuring JMAT provides the very best for all. Their role is at the heart of governance in our Trust, holding the CEO to account on the progress and performance of its schools and the effectiveness of the leadership within.

The purpose of governance

As outlined in the Governance Handbook 2020, the purpose of governance is to provide confident and strong strategic leadership which leads to robust accountability, oversight and assurance for education and financial performance.

Governing bodies must be ambitious for all children and young people and infused with a passion for education and a commitment to continuous school improvement that enables the best outcomes. This is achieved in our vision as an Academy Trust not in the board room, but in each individual school and classroom.

Governance is driven by inquisitive, independent minds and through conversations focused on the key strategic issues which are conducted with humility, good judgement, resilience and determination. Facilitated through focused visits to school, liaison and conversation with both Senior Leaders and Staff responsible for the key areas, as outlined in either the schools Developing Excellence Plan or School Improvement Plan.

The six key features of governance are as follows and are shown at the top of all our agenda:

- **Strategic leadership** that sets and champions vision, ethos and strategy.
- **Accountability** that drives up educational standards.
- **People** with the right skills, experience, qualities and capacity.
- **Structures** that reinforce clearly defined roles and responsibilities.
- **Compliance** with statutory and contractual requirements.
- **Evaluation** to monitor and improve the quality and impact of governance

Governing Body Meetings

The James Montgomery Academy Trust (JMAT) sets out its record of the key features in each of its Local Governing Body (LGB) agendas.

The agendas are pre-determined from a Trust perspective and recognise the ESFA, DfE, and Academy obligations at specific points in the academic year. The agenda and subsequent minutes should reflect governance in the term to date. The minutes of each governing body meeting should be professional in their content, follow the structure of the agenda and document appropriate challenge.

Actions from outstanding roles, work committed to and questions unanswered should be apportioned into the ACTION section at the bottom of the minutes for governors to act upon as matters arising before the following meeting.

The JMAT structure of LGB meetings requires at least termly meetings within each academic year:

Autumn

Spring

Summer

All urgent and unplanned eventualities can be catered for under “extraordinary” LGB meetings.

Governing Body Structure

The following table is a reflection of the governance structure as indicated in the JMAT Scheme of Delegation for your Academy. This table considers the minimum number for a Governing Body which is set to 3 and the number at which a Local Governing Body can be effective, which is set to 7.

The maximum number for a Local Governing Body is suggested as 12.

TITLE	
The Headteacher	Ex Officio
Deputy Head/Assistant Head	Ex Officio
Foundation Governors Priest (ex officio)	4 inc. priest
Staff	1
Parent	No more than 3
Co opted	4 (3 of which can be appointed by the board of Trustees)

(4.3.1) The Board of Trustees for James Montgomery Academy Trust reserve the right to appoint up to 3 co-opted members to the Local Governing Body of a James Montgomery Academy School in addition to **(4.2.1)** representation from the parish priest and a nominated member who are represented in the table as foundation governors.

Foundation Status Governor relates to:

- Diocese where related to Church Schools (of whom one must be the incumbent and or one of their nominee)
- Trust in relation to the holder of the land upon which the Academy operates i.e. Ellis Trust Representative.
- JMAT where the land is owned by James Montgomery Academy Trust

Staff and Parent Governor

Staff Governor and Parent Governors must be duly appointed by the Local Governing Body with a parent governor being a parent of a pupil at the Academy or where if not reasonably practical a parent of a child of compulsory school age.

Parent Governors - elected by parents or carers of registered pupils attending the school at the time of the election. Through the children, parent governors have first-hand experience of the delivery of the curriculum, and how the school is perceived from a parent’s point of view. This enables parent governors to bring a different perspective to the strategic management of the school. Genuine parent engagement exists when there is a meaningful relationship between parents and teachers, with a shared goals of maximising learning outcomes for

children. Communication is key to inform parents and to help them to develop their child's learning at home, in the community and in school.

Co-opted Governor

Ideally co-opted governors should not be employed by the school or be a parent of a child on roll. This is to ensure that an objective view is maintained within the LGB.

Term of Office

The standard term of office for new appointments on the Local Governing Body shall be 4 years. A newly converted school will, where possible, retain its current LGB members into the new structure. This does not apply to the Headteacher nor the Parish Incumbent.

Co-opted members shall be elected for a 2 year term only.

The Chair and Vice Chair positions shall be elected on a 1 year term and be appointed annually. (See NGA Guidance on maximum term of a Chair) – Succession Planning

The Role of a Governor – Expectations

The agenda for each meeting reflects what has happened within the term to date. Each term, ahead of the LGB meeting, governors with specific responsibilities are encouraged to attend school to conduct their structured visit, gather information and satisfy their inquiry. This information should then be shared within the LGB meeting in the form of a Governor Visit Report.

(Governor Visit Reports – are shared on each school website in the governor section for ease of accessibility. The focus visit or inquiry should be linked to the school DEP/SIP or Ofsted Priorities.)

Governors should make clear contributions to the governing body meetings which determine the:

- Vision and ethos of the school
- Clear and ambitious strategic priorities and targets for the school which includes the governing body
- Accessibility of the curriculum for all abilities

Good governance holds leaders to account by monitoring the schools performance. Governors should supply appropriate challenge to the status quo, not taking information or data at face value and always seeking to improve things, including in the following areas:

- Outcomes and priorities for educational performance
- Self-evaluation – of the LGB

Governors must be committed to devoting the required time and energy to the role and being ambitious to achieve the best possible outcomes for young people. Prepared to in line with the 7 principles of Public Life, give time, skills and knowledge to develop themselves and others in order to create highly effective governance.

The Seven Principles of Public Life are found on this link

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-7-principles-of-public-life/the-7-principles-of-public-life--2>



What it means to be Chair of Governors

Guidance can be found via NCTL or NGA with ease.

For JMAT the role of Chair is a critical one in our governing bodies. An effective Chair will work with the Headteacher to promote and maintain standards, ensure that the LGB sets a clear vision and ethos with strategic direction for the school, which reflects the needs of the school community. This should be aligned to the priorities for the school. The Chair should encourage governors to work together as an effective team, help them to build their skills, knowledge and experience through regular training and visits into school. The Chair must ensure that governors are actively contributing to school life and participate constructively in meetings and committees.

The Chair should be supported by a deputy – named the Vice Chair, who will stand in for them in their absence.

The Chair should ensure that the meetings are conducted effectively according to the constitution and matters are dealt with in an orderly fashion. This role is most effective when supported by a good working relationship with the Headteacher and Clerk.

Governing Body Protocol

Agenda Setting

1.	The agenda for each meeting is set at Trust level initially, taking into consideration the guidance from LA, ESFA, Academies Financial Handbook and the Trust cycle of evaluation i.e. assessment points etc.	GOVERNANCE LEAD
2.	Agendas are issued to each Headteacher (HT)/Executive Headteacher (EHT) and Chair of Governors (CoG) 2 weeks prior to the meeting date to explore what school specific agenda items need adding – usually at the start of the academic year	CoG/HT/EHT
3.	Governors wishing to add specific items to the agenda should bring these to the CoG/HT/EHT's attention within this 7 weeks, before the Agenda is shared wider	GOVERNORS
4.	CoG and/or HT/EHT will decide whether governor items are agenda appropriate or personal issue which should be addressed outside the context of a LGB meeting/ CoG/HT/EHT to advise accordingly	CoG/HT/EHT

Supporting documents

1.	Headteacher and SLT (or other) to prepare and email to the Clerk all supporting documentation for consideration/presentation at the scheduled meeting REMINDER – ALL DOCUMENTS ARE TO BE WITH GOVERNORS 7 DAYS PRIOR TO A MEETING	HEAD
2.	All meeting documents are shared with LGB – Preferred method is to upload them to a secure governor section of the schools website	CLERK
3.	Email to be sent to all governors to confirm that the documentation is available for them to print/download as necessary	CLERK

Governor viewing docs

1.	Governors must have read documentation and prepared any questions in advance of the meeting, a space is available on all agendas for this (Governors are encouraged to ask questions and this can then be reflected in the minutes as challenge)	GOVERNORS
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The Meeting

1.	Apologies for absence should be sent to the Clerk and or CoG by email or telephone message, as soon as possible	GOVERNORS
2.	In the event of the CoG absence – the Vice Chair CoG will preside over the meeting	
3.	To aid additional attendees – some agenda items may be brought forward to the start of the meeting	

Post Meeting

1.	Draft minutes are prepared and issued to HT/EHT and CoG for pre-approval within 7 working days where possible.	CLERK
2.	Any necessary adjustments are made and the draft minutes are shared with all governors via the preferred method (secure section of website) within 10 working days	CLERK
3.	Governors are advised that the draft minutes are available for perusal with actions allotted to individuals	CLERK
4.	Governors are expected to act upon any actions allotted within the nominated timeframe	GOVERNORS
5.	Any Reports from Enquiry Visits made by Governors should be sent to the Clerk as soon after the visit as possible to be shared with the relevant LGB Meeting preparation/supporting docs.	GOVERNORS
6.	Approved LGB minutes remain on the secure section of the website for 6 months as a governor aid memoir	CLERK
7.	Register of attendance is updated and uploaded to the school and JMAT website	CLERK

Typical Link and Statutory Governor Roles

Curriculum / Priority Links - Governors should understand the needs of the school from its working school improvement plan and have insight through focus visits to school and appropriate training to each of the related foci.

Premium & Sports Premium – Governors should understand the relevant school pupil performance data that shows progress of different groups over time. They will hold the school to account for ensuring that all available funding is used effectively to close the attainment gap between children who are eligible for pupil premium and those who are not.

Safeguarding – Governors should provide a link between the Governing Body, committees and staff of the school regarding aspects of safeguarding. The safeguarding governor should take a strategic approach to monitoring safeguarding arrangements. This role would also address behaviour and attendance and anti-bullying.

SEND - Governors should have enhanced knowledge, skills and understanding of SEND and will hold the school to account for ensuring they have removed barriers to learning and have put effective special educational provision in place. This role would also include Children Looked After.

Wellbeing - The governing board has a key role to play when it comes to pupil and staff mental health and wellbeing. They should work with the leadership team to agree priorities to promote children's learning and wellbeing and monitor progress. The governing board should look to demonstrate and reiterate its commitment to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of both staff and pupils. This commitment from the governing board emphasises the importance of establishing robust mental health provision in schools for staff and pupils, providing equal opportunities, building resilience, and developing tools and support strategies.

The JMAT website under Governance defines in more detail job descriptions for Governance. Each role does not have to be held by a separate individual. Schools should determine an appropriate link directly to the school priorities as determined in their DEP and a Governor can hold a responsibility for a variety of areas.

Effective governance is based on six key features:

Strategic leadership that sets and champions vision, ethos and strategy.

Accountability that drives up educational standards.

People with the right skills, experience, qualities and capacity.

Structures that reinforce clearly defined roles and responsibilities.

Compliance with statutory and contractual requirements.

Evaluation to monitor and improve the quality and impact of governance.

The first two features are the core pillars of the board's role and purpose. The second two are about the way in which governance is organised, and the last two are about ensuring and improving the quality of governance.

The governing board and board of trustees have the following core strategic functions (this is subject to the JMAT Scheme of Delegation that should be read in conjunction with this code of conduct):

This policy refers to Governors on a Local Governing Board and Trustees on the Board of Trustees.

Establishing the strategic direction, by:

- Setting the vision, values, and objectives for the school
- Agreeing the school improvement strategy with priorities and targets
- Meeting statutory duties

Ensuring accountability, by:

- Working with the Trust appointing the head of school/headteacher
- Monitoring progress towards targets
- Engaging with stakeholders

As individuals on the board we agree to the following:

Role & Responsibilities

- We understand the purpose of the board and the role of the head of school/headteacher.
- We accept that we have no legal authority to act individually, except when the board has given us delegated authority to do so, and therefore we will only speak on behalf of the governing board when we have been specifically authorised to do so.
- We accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the board or its delegated agents. This means that we will not speak against majority decisions outside the governing board meeting.
- We have a duty to act fairly and without prejudice, and in so far as we have responsibility for staff, we will fulfil all that is expected of a good employer.
- We will encourage open and transparent governance and will act appropriately.
- We will consider carefully how our decisions may affect the community and other schools.
- We will always be mindful of our responsibility to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of our school. Our actions within the school and the local community will reflect this.
- In making or responding to criticism or complaints affecting the school we will follow the procedures established by the governing board.
- We will actively support and challenge the head of school/headteacher on relevant matters.
- We acknowledge that accepting the office of a trustee/governor involves the commitment of time and energy.

- We will each involve ourselves actively in the work of the governing board, and accept our fair share of responsibilities, including service on committees or working groups from time to time.
- We will make full effort to attend all meetings and where we cannot attend explain in advance why we are unable to.
- We will get to know the school well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in school activities.
- We will visit the school, with all visits to school arranged in advance with the staff and undertaken within the framework established by the governing board and agreed with the head of school/headteacher.
- We will consider seriously our individual and collective needs for training and development, and will undertake relevant training.
- We will strive to work as a team in which constructive working relationships are actively promoted.
- We will express views openly, courteously and respectfully in all our communications with other governors.
- We will support the chair in their role of ensuring appropriate conduct both at meetings and at all times.
- We are prepared to answer queries from other trustees/governors in relation to delegated functions and take into account any concerns expressed, and we will acknowledge the time, effort and skills that have been committed to the delegated function by those involved.
- We will seek to develop effective working relationships with the head of school/headteacher, staff and parents, the local authority, other relevant agencies and the community.

Confidentiality

- We will observe complete confidentiality when matters are deemed confidential or where they concern specific members of staff or pupils, both inside or outside school.
- We will exercise the greatest prudence at all times when discussions regarding school business arise outside a governing board meeting.
- We will not reveal the details of any governing board vote.

Conflicts of interest

- We will record any pecuniary or other business interest (including those related to people we are connected with) that we have in connection with the governing board's business in the Register of Business Interests, and if any such conflicted matter arises in a meeting we will offer to leave the meeting for the appropriate length of time.
- We will also declare any conflict of loyalty at the start of any meeting should the situation arise.
- We will act in the best interests of the school as a whole and not as a representative of any group, even if elected to the governing body.

Breach of this code of conduct

- If we believe this code has been breached, we will raise this issue with the chair and the chair will investigate; the governing board will only use suspension/removal as a last resort after seeking to resolve any difficulties or disputes in more constructive ways.
- Should it be the chair that we believe has breached this code, another director/governor, such as the vice chair will investigate.

The JMAT Annual Governance Schedule prompts visits at specific points throughout the academic year and provides a guide to governor visits.

AUTUMN TERM - Standard Agenda Items
ACCOUNTABILITY FOR FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finance Update - Previous Year Acceptance of Pay Policy 2022/23
ACCOUNTABILITY FOR QUALITY OF EDUCATION – STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviewing the School's Vision and Strategy for Improvement Overview of SEF/IDSR/ASP Comparative data (Educational outcomes/end of year data/results) Overview/Update of SIP (Key areas of focus for the year, expected outcomes & progress) Pupil Premium Statement & 3 Year Strategy Staffing Update & Staff Wellbeing (Any changes or concerns that the board need to be made aware of)
COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY AND OTHER CONTRACTUAL REQUIREMENTS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safeguarding DSL report (Summer term overview, behavior, exclusions and pupil wellbeing) Designated Teach report (LAC & PLAC annual report) Notification of term Dates 2023/24 Headteacher appraisal outcome The Schools Admissions policy (2024/25) Policy Review (School to identify policies which the LGB are responsible for updating. Working party to be instructed to review. All mandatory policies are already uploaded to RMy or JMAT site). Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) – (Revised September 2022, document to be read and signed through RMy system)
ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair positions
GOVERNANCE REVIEW <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chairs report and urgent actions taken (Since the last meeting) Annual review of governing body skills audit (To be reviewed or circulated outside of the meeting) Review of the LGB membership and designated governor/link roles Schedule of designated governor/link visits Governor Training (Any training undertaken though ForgeCPD/RoSIS/NGA) Review the effectiveness of governance arrangements incorporating the 6 key features shown at the top of the agenda (From September the clerk to review the effectiveness of governance to identify training needs)
SPRING TERM - Standard Agenda Items
ACCOUNTABILITY FOR EDUCATIONAL PERFORMANCE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finance Update (Budget update from Core team)
ACCOUNTABILITY FOR QUALITY OF EDUCATION – STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pupil Progress end of Autumn term (educational data) SIP Progress (key areas of focus for the year, expected outcomes & progress) Staffing Update & Staff Wellbeing (Any changes or concerns that the board need to be made aware of)
COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY AND OTHER CONTRACTUAL REQUIREMENTS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safeguarding DSL report (Autumn term overview, exclusions and pupil wellbeing) SEND Information report (Referral updates)
GOVERNANCE REVIEW <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chairs report and urgent actions taken (Since the last meeting) Schedule of designated governor/link visits Governor Training (Any training undertaken though ForgeCPD/RoSIS/NGA) Review the effectiveness of governance arrangements incorporating the 6 key features shown at the top of the agenda (From September the clerk to review the effectiveness of governance to identify training needs)
SUMMER TERM - Standard Agenda Items
ACCOUNTABILITY FOR EDUCATIONAL PERFORMANCE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finance Update (Budget update from Core team) PE & Sports Premium (PE & Sports premium to be uploaded to the school website by 31st July)
ACCOUNTABILITY FOR QUALITY OF EDUCATION – STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pupil Progress end of Spring term (educational data) SIP Progress (key areas of focus for the year, expected outcomes & progress) Staffing Update & Staff Wellbeing (Any changes or concerns that the board need to be made aware of)
COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY AND OTHER CONTRACTUAL REQUIREMENTS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safeguarding DSL report (End of year overview, behavior, exclusions and pupil wellbeing) Acceptance of Term Dates & Inset Day 2023/24
EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chairs report and urgent actions taken (Since the last meeting) Schedule of designated governor/link visits Governor Training (Any training undertaken though ForgeCPD/RoSIS/NGA)

- Review the effectiveness of governance arrangements incorporating the 6 key features shown at the top of the agenda (From September the clerk to review the effectiveness of governance to identify training needs)
- Register of Interest form 2023/24 (Documents to be signed in preparation of October’s audit)
- LGB meeting dates for 2023/24

Suggested Link Governor Visits – aligned with Agenda items.

GOVERNOR ENQUIRY VISIT SCHEDULE

OCTOBER VISITS	JANUARY VISITS	APRIL VISITS	MAY VISTS	JUNE VISITS
PE/PP - report to LGB Autumn	SEN – report to LGB Spring	PE/PP - report to LGB Summer	SEN – report to LGB Summer	Mental Health and Wellbeing - report to LGB Autumn
LAC - report to LGB Autumn	Safeguarding – report to LGB Spring	LAC - report to LGB Summer	Safeguarding – report to LGB Summer	Curriculum - report to LGB Autumn
Curriculum - report to LGB Autumn	Data – report to LGB Spring	Curriculum – report to LGB Summer	Curriculum – report to LGB Summer	
	Curriculum – report to LGB Spring			