The Balcarras Trust

Local Governing Board Handbook 2026 - 2027



Welcome and Introduction

We are pleased to welcome you as a new member of our governance team. Your role as a local governor is crucial to the success of our trust and the communities we serve. Governance provides the strategic direction, oversight, and accountability that enables us to achieve our mission and uphold our values.

This handbook is designed to give you a comprehensive introduction to our trust, your role, and how you can contribute effectively. Please read it carefully, and don't hesitate to reach out to your clerk if you have any questions.

The Balcarras Trust, is a small multi academy trust based in Gloucestershire. There are currently 3 secondary schools in the Trust all of which are successful and popular.

Balcarras School is a large 11-18 school of over 1400 pupils based in Charlton Kings. It has been consistently rated outstanding by Ofsted.

The High School Leckhampton is a new 11-16 school which opened in 2021 and with just over 810 pupils. It was rated outstanding by Ofsted in March 2024 and has just achieved great success in their first GCSE results since opening.

Winchcombe School is a smaller 11-16 school with just over 500 pupils on role. Under the new Ofsted framework, it has been rated as Expected standard in every area.

All three schools work closely together to promote excellence.

The Trust is committed to providing the highest quality comprehensive education.

About Us

Our History and Vision

The Trust will establish the highest educational standards in our schools. We believe strongly in the value of comprehensive education and we are committed to the belief that all children should receive an outstanding education regardless of ability, prior attainment or background.

Click here for our complete mission statement

Trustees

Trustees have overall responsibility for the governance and strategic direction of the trust. Their duties include setting the vision, monitoring performance, and ensuring compliance with legal, financial and regulatory requirements.

Local Governing Boards

Local governing boards focus on the performance and wellbeing of their individual schools or sites. They provide support, monitor progress, and report back to the trust board.

How We Work Together

The trust board delegates certain responsibilities to local boards to empower local decision-making while maintaining overall accountability.
Click here to read our Key governance documentation

Meetings, processes and procedures

Meeting Schedule

- The trust board meets at least five times per year.
- Local governing boards meet similarly frequently.
- Ad hoc or committee meetings may be scheduled as needed.

Meeting Preparation

- Agendas and papers will be circulated at least 7 days before meetings via the dedicated governor portal GM - Governance Management via National College)
- Please review all documents in advance to contribute fully and add your attendance, comments to the meeting pack

Quorum & Voting

- A agreed quorum must be met for decision to be valid.
- Decisions are made by majority vote; the Chair may have a casting vote.

Confidentiality

- Discussions and documents are confidential unless otherwise agreed.
- Sensitive information must be handled with care and discretion.

Code of Conduct

A Code of Conduct is a set of clear guidelines and expectations that outline how trustees, governors, or any members of a board should behave while performing their roles. It helps ensure everyone acts ethically, professionally, and consistently, promoting trust and good governance.

Read the full Code of Conduct here.

LGB Terms of Reference

The Local Governing Body (LGB) Terms of Reference within the trust outlines the structure, responsibilities, and procedures for the LGB, which operates as a committee of the academy trust board.
Read the full LGB Terms of Reference here.

The Seven Principles of Public Life

As trustees and governors, you are expected to uphold the highest standards of conduct. These are embodied in the Seven Nolan Principles of Public Life:

1. Selflessness – Act solely in the public interest.
2. Integrity – Avoid placing yourself under any obligation to people or organisations that might try to influence you.
3. Objectivity – Make decisions based on merit, without bias or discrimination.
4. Accountability – Be accountable to the public and stakeholders for your decisions and actions.
5. Openness – Be as open as possible about your decisions and actions.
6. Honesty – Declare any private interests and resolve any conflicts transparently.
7. Leadership – Promote and support these principles through your own behaviour and leadership.

By adhering to these principles, you help maintain public trust and ensure effective, ethical governance.

Policies

Key policies that trustees and governors must be familiar with include:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion
- Health & Safety
- Financial Management and Controls
- Whistleblowing
- Data Protection

Where to Find Policies

All Trust policies are available on The Balcarras Trust website.

Each school will confirm a link to their relevant policies for you.

Training

Mandatory Training

- New governor induction training
- Safeguarding awareness
- Link Governor training
- Equality and diversity awareness
- PREVENT

Recommended Training

- Equality and diversity awareness
- GDPR and data handling
- Cyber

Support & Mentoring

New members may be paired with an experienced trustee/governor for guidance during their first year if requested.

Key Legislation and Regulations

You should be familiar with:

- The Charities Act 2011
- Companies Act 2006 (if applicable)
- Education Act 2002 (for education trusts)
- Equality Act 2010
- Data Protection Act 2018 & GDPR



The Balcarras Trust

The Balcarras Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. We particularly welcome applications from underrepresented groups including ethnicity, gender, transgender, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion. Please also read the Recruitment Selection and Disclosure Policy within "How to apply" which includes our policy on recruiting ex-offenders. All posts are subject to an enhanced DBS check and receipt of two satisfactory references.

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