



Governance Handbook

2026-27
(11th Edition)



Bedfordshire Schools Trust (BEST) – Governance Philosophy

Governance leadership is Strategic Leadership. It:

- Sets vision, ethos and strategic direction
- Delivers accountability
- Ensures that every decision made and every pound spent puts children first.

The Garden Analogy:

- Consider a fence separating your garden from your neighbour's. Your neighbour plants some bulbs
- You can lean over the fence and ask why those particular bulbs, in that particular place, at that particular time of year, the effect those bulbs will have on the rest of the plants in the garden, how much they cost and were they value for money
- You cannot jump over the fence, dig up the bulbs, plant different ones, rearrange them, dump other seeds on top of them, or pile a bunch of horse manure on top in order to 'helpfully' make them grow better
- The fence is the dividing line between strategic and operational.

Governance Handbook 2026-27

Bedfordshire Schools Trust (BEST)

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Welcome

You are most welcome to the Bedfordshire Schools Trust (BEST). BEST comprises 11 flourishing academies on 12 different sites, delivering first choice education to over 8500 pupils, from Early Years to Advanced Level Study. This provision is augmented by five BEST Nurseries and enriched by BEST Central, Educational and Financial Services. At the heart of BEST, is BEST House. This conference and administrative centre is part of BEST Charities.

Governance is through the Board of Trustees (the 'Board') and Local Committees of the Board (LCBs). The Board is responsible for the effective operation of BEST and each academy therein. The primary role of the LCB is to ensure that the vision and values of BEST are faithfully upheld. They support and hold the Principal to account for the performance of pupils and staff and engage meaningfully with all parents/carers and wider community.

Thank you

Thank you for volunteering to be a Local Committee Member (LCM). It is a terrifically rewarding and highly demanding role. Only the best educational standards are acceptable. As an LCM, you will gain skills appropriate to the scale and nature of the task, set the highest expectations and tackle any signs of underperformance and help to ensure that all pupils strive to be the best they can be and are well prepared for life.

The purpose of this handbook is twofold. Firstly, it outlines the core role and functions of the Board and the LCBs. Secondly, it provides a point of reference on all the legal duties of LCM, signposting to more detailed information, guidance and resources.¹ The handbook is rooted in the belief that good governance is essential to the success of any organisation and that the aim of governance within BEST is to ensure our mission is achieved through effective:

- Strategic leadership
- Accountability and assurance
- Strategic engagement.

The handbook, now in its tenth edition, will be kept under review and updated to reflect feedback from the BEST community, the law affecting Governance and changes to education policy. This is an ongoing process.

I wish you every success and much enjoyment in your service to our pupils, staff and academies.



Dr Alan Lee
Chief Executive Officer
& National Leader of Education

Date Adopted:	September 2026	Review Date:	Summer 2027
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¹ This handbook should be read in conjunction with:

- The 'Memorandum and Articles of Association', accessed at www.bestacademies.org.uk/legal
- 'Academy Trust Governance Guide', click [here](#) to view
- 'Trust Quality Descriptors', click [here](#) to view
- 'Education Inspection Framework', click [here](#) to view
- 'Academy Trust Handbook', click [here](#) to view.

A copy of each is provided in Governor Hub.

BEST: Mission, Vision, Values and Operating Principles

BEST

BEST is the legal entity responsible for the governance of all academies within the Trust. BEST shall have regard to (but for the avoidance of doubt shall not be bound by) any guidance as to the governance of academies that the Secretary of State may publish to the extent permitted by the governing documents.

The object of BEST is to advance education for the public benefit in the United Kingdom. This is achieved by establishing, maintaining, managing and developing academies². The academies will offer high quality education and collaborate and compete with each other to continually raise standards and best serve the wider community.

We believe in lean, focused and impactful governance. Leaders are empowered through a high autonomy and high accountability culture that **always puts children first**.

BEST Mission Statement

- to grow the BEST in everyone -

We believe in the importance of high expectations, hard work and the development of a community of academies where each of us strive to **'be the best that we can be'**.

BEST Vision Statement

BEST aims to:

1. Grow to comprise 12 academies (9000 pupils) and five nurseries, providing community-based education
2. Ensure all academies achieve a minimum Ofsted inspection Expected grade in all areas, with 30% achieving an Exceptional grade in all areas. Outcomes in every academy/nursery will be above the 50% percentile with half of outcomes being above the 25% percentile
3. Secure financial sustainability, with clean annual audits each year and a minimum 5% of GAG in reserves.

BEST Values – We will:

Always put Children first

Our reference point question is 'how will this improve outcomes for children and enable them to go on and succeed in life?'

Collaborate to support and compete to challenge

Our academies work together to add value and compete to improve continually

Provide community-based education

Our academies form a coherent learning community at the heart of the Bedfordshire community

Have the courage to be compassionate

Our community treats all with trust, kindness and honesty

BEST Operating Principles – We will:

Deliver BEST outcomes

Outcomes will be in the top 20% nationally

Provide BEST opportunities

An extensive range of opportunities beyond the classroom will be provided to develop the whole person

Nurture talent

Our responsibility is to invest in our people and bring out the BEST in everyone

Operate a high autonomy, high accountability culture

Professionals will lead our system and take responsibility to continually raise standards

Lead through service

Leaders and followers will work together with mutual respect and shared responsibility

² References to academies also includes nurseries unless otherwise stated.

Members

Members have ultimate responsibility for BEST achieving its charitable objectives. They oversee and hold the Trustees to account for the governance arrangements of the Trust. The Members agree the Articles of Association and have the power to appoint and remove Trustees. They comprise:

- one person appointed by BEST
- the Chairperson of the Trustees
- any person appointed under Article 15A.

Members receive copies of the Governance Handbook for comment. Through Governor Hub, they have access to agenda items and minutes for all meetings of the Trustees and Local Committees of the Board (LCBs). Members meet once per year to receive and approve BEST's financial statements.

Members are bound by the undertakings contained in Article 8³

Reserved Matters

- To change the name of the Academy Trust
- To determine BEST's Mission Statement
- To change the Objects of the Academy Trust
- To change the structure of the BEST Board
- To amend the Articles of Association
- To pass a resolution to wind up the Academy Trust
- To appoint the auditors.

³ Companies Act 2006

Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees has collective accountability and strategic responsibility for BEST and each academy therein. It has a focus on ensuring BEST delivers an excellent education to all pupils, while maintaining effective financial management.

The Board provides ongoing support and challenge to the executive team and Local Committees of the Board (LCBs). It meets six times per year plus any extraordinary meetings. Each trustee receives a single vote, with a Chair and Vice Chair being elected annually.

The Board currently comprises of eight members, including the CEO. Future trustees may be appointed or elected under BEST's Articles. These latter set out the operation of the Board.

The Board fulfils the following core functions through delegation of its powers to the CEO to provide:

- strategic leadership
- accountability and assurance
- strategic engagement

In making strategic decisions the Board:

- acts in line with BEST's charitable objects and governing documents: regulatory, contractual and statutory requirements; and, funding agreement
- will have a full understanding of the communities BEST serves, including the full cultural and religious diversity of BEST and its community
- is well informed by the available evidence of what works or is likely to be effective
- welcomes open debate from a diverse range of individuals, views and experiences
- considers the views and needs of BEST's key stakeholders, particularly parents and carers.

The Board has a duty to:

- safeguard and promote the welfare of children
- have regard for any statutory guidance on safeguarding, issued by the Secretary of State for Education
- ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff, volunteers, contractors and proprietors.

The Board currently comprises eight members, including the CEO. Future trustees may be appointed or elected under BEST's Articles. These latter set out the operation of the Board.

The Board is committed to monitoring and improving the quality and impact of governance. It has achieved the National Governor Mark Quality Award.

Key Responsibilities

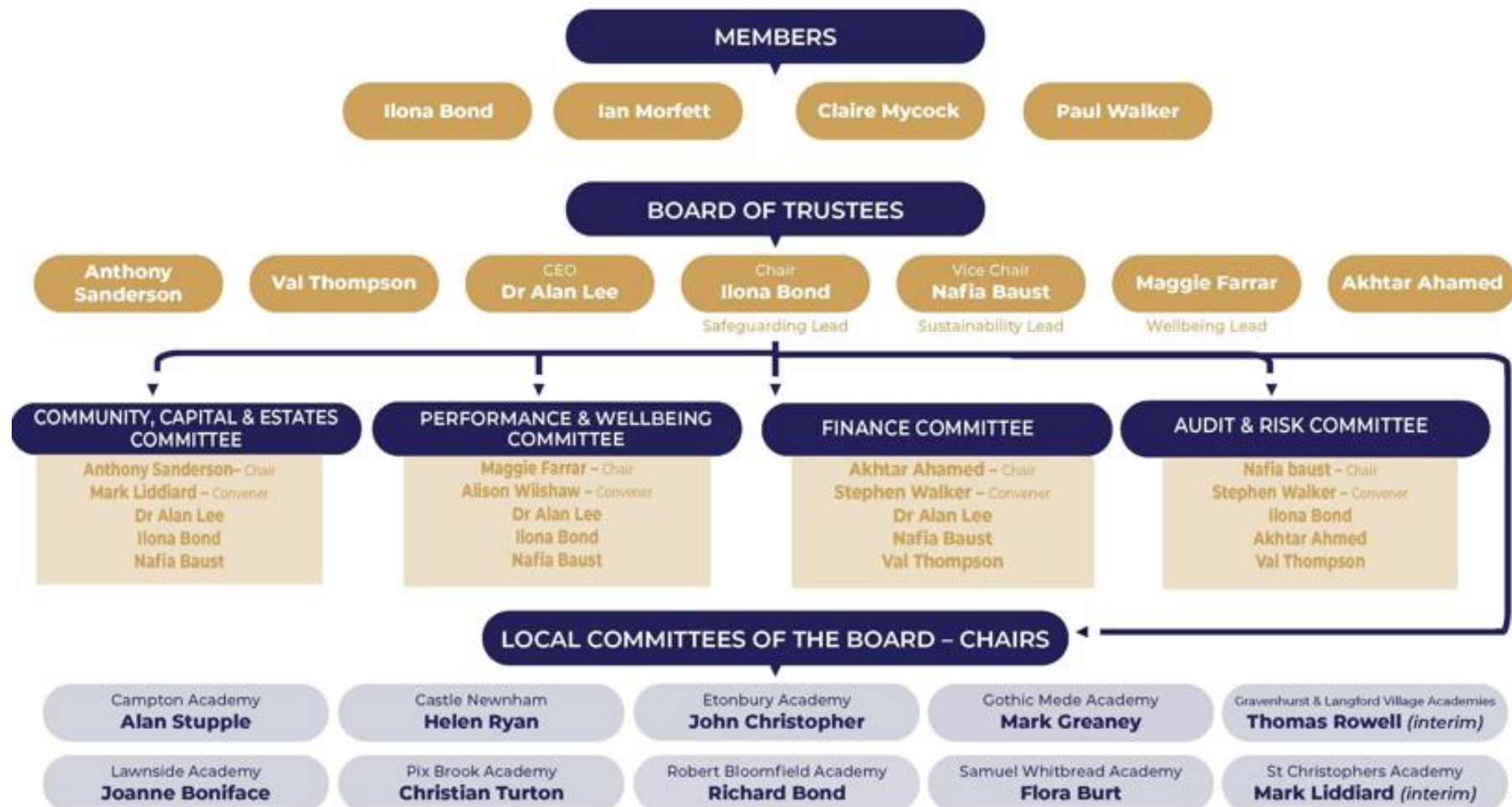
Strategy, executive leadership, accountability, non-executive leadership and engagement

- Set and champion a clear strategy for BEST, which aligns with BEST's charitable objects, covers all of the pillars of trust quality contained and sets out BEST's aspirations for growth, over time
- Ensure high-quality executive leadership through appointing its CEO and providing effective support and challenge to the CEO and executive leadership team (ELT)
- Maintain sufficient independence from the ELT to allow scrutiny of both their performance and BEST's overall performance
- Set clear objectives and effectively manage the CEO to ensure high performance, securing appropriate levels of remuneration for the CEO and ELT
- Hold the ELT to account for the effective implementation of BEST's strategy and operating plan, Inc. in relation to resources and the drivers of impact
- Assure itself of the integrity of financial information
- Assure itself that there are robust risk controls and risk management systems in place
- Assure itself that there is compliance with regulatory, contractual and statutory requirements, Inc. safeguarding
- Ensure a high performing governance structure where trustees and other non-executive leaders have the expertise to fulfil their functions effectively, with representation that reduces biases in decision-making is in place
- Access independent insight from internal and external audits, reviews of governance arrangements and other forms of expert advice
- Provide Board induction, training and review
- Support effective succession planning by building a pipeline of future trustees and LCBs⁴
- Oversee strategic relationships with external stakeholders

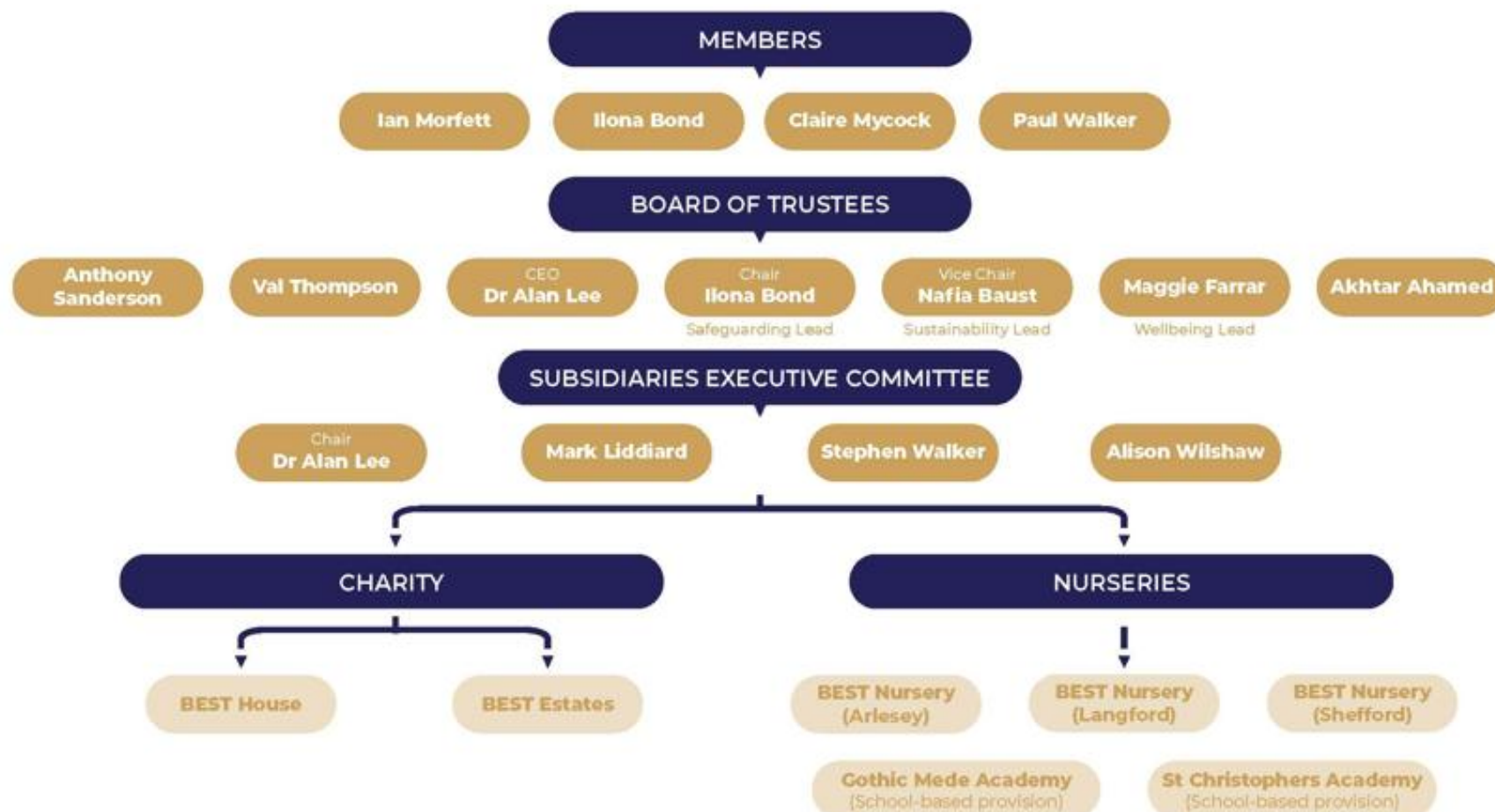
⁴ Delegated to the LCB Chair

Chief Executive Officer (Accounting Officer)
• Appoint and lead a high-performing ELT • Is personally responsible for parliament and to the DfE's Accounting Officer for the Trust financial position • Lead BEST's ELT to create and implement an effective BEST Operating Plan with clarity about delivery of BEST-level and Academy-Level activities, that aligns with the BEST Strategic Action Plan • Ensure that the ELT acts within the levels of authority delegated by the board • Set BEST's annual operating plan, budget, and implement effective operation systems to deliver on the BEST strategy • Deliver effective risk management across the key functions of BEST • Ensure compliance of regulatory, contractual and statutory requirements including those within the Academy Trust Governance guides • Safeguard and promote the welfare of children and have regard to any guidance on safeguarding issued by the Secretary of State • Support trustees and other non-executive leaders to meet their duties, working to ensure operational compliance and fulfilment of all statutory responsibilities • Communicate BEST's strategy, plans and achievements to stakeholders.
Board of Trustees and Chief Executive Officer
• Review progress rigorously to ensure strategic alignment and effective implementation • Work in partnership to ensure effective relations between the ELT and members of the board • Ensure the ELT has the expertise needed to fulfil functions delegated by the board, for example secure financial expertise. Support effective succession planning by building a leadership pipeline • Agree the BEST Operating Plan and budget to deliver the BEST Strategic Plan • Agree metrics and process by which progress will be assessed • Involve parents, academies, communities so that decision-making is supported by meaningful engagement.
Governance Professional
• Provide independent governance advice, guidance and effective administrative support to the Board • Support the Board to meet high standards of governance, including fulfilling legal or regulatory requirements and decision-making • Help the Board to understand its role and legal duties; support the Chair to facilitate strategic debate and decision-making.
Reserved Matters
• Change the names of the Academies • Determine the mission, vision (including structure), values and operating principles of the Academies • Agree a BEST-wide Admissions Policy • Adopt or alter the constitution and terms of reference of any committee of the BEST board • Establish a trading company.

GOVERNANCE – ACADEMIES



GOVERNANCE – SUBSIDIARIES



Standing Committees of the Board ⁵	
Performance and Wellbeing Committee ⁶ – Convenor: Director of Education	
Key Responsibilities	
○ Hold the BEST Director of Education to account for all aspects of academy/nursery performance, inclusion and wellbeing ○ Scrutinise the rationale for identifying strategic priorities, the accuracy of academy level and BEST-level data analysis and the clarity of purpose and speed of impact in addressing areas of underperformance or risk ○ Identify strong practice or innovation and promote its wider dissemination.	
Finance Committee ⁷ – Convenor: Chief Financial Officer	
Key Responsibilities	
○ Hold the BEST Chief Finance Officer to account for BEST’s financial sustainability and reserves position – minimum 5% of GAG funding – to support academy improvement initiatives/projects ○ Ensure that the Board is fully aware of BEST’s financial position, providing assurances that key enabling resources are optimised and aligned with BEST’s strategic and operational aims and objectives ○ Gain assurance on the effectiveness of: ➤ Financial planning, budget-setting, performance analysis and financial reporting, and ➤ Procurement processes and outcomes	
Audit and Risk Committee – Convenor: Chief Financial Officer	
Key Responsibilities	
○ Direct a programme of internal checks (internal audit) to ensure financial and non-financial controls (e.g., HR, Data Protection, Safeguarding) are operating effectively. ○ Ensure the implementation of recommendations from all audit reports and provide an annual summary report to the Board. ○ Review the Trust’s Risk Register at every meeting, ensuring risks are identified and mitigated. ○ Review the annual report and statutory accounts; evaluate the performance and independence of the external auditors. ○ Oversee policies regarding Whistleblowing, Fraud, and Bribery.	
Subsidiaries (Nurseries) Executive Committee – Convenor: Governance Professional	
Key Responsibilities	
○ Ensure that the vision and values of BEST are faithfully upheld, clearly communicated and revisited, delivering an ethos and culture of ambition that enables children and staff to excel ○ Hold the Nursery Managers to account for the quality of care and progress made by all children ○ Monitor the use of resources to ensure best value and sustainability.	
Subsidiaries (Charity) Executive Committee – Convenor: Governance Professional	
Key Responsibilities	
○ Ensure the Charity fulfils its aims and objectives ○ Hold the Chief Operations Officer (COO) to account for the strategic direction and management of BEST House ○ Ensure legal responsibilities are fulfilled.	

⁵ At the beginning of each academic year committee terms of reference should be reviewed and agreed to ensure full coverage of key responsibilities

⁶ The committee should ensure it includes at least one non-executive Trustee with the specific skills required to interpret detailed educational performance data, ensuring the Board maintains an accurate, independent understanding of the Trust’s educational performance. (Source: DfE Academy Trusts Governance Guide)

Local Committees of the Board (LCBs) – Convenor: Academy Principal Key Responsibilities
○ Ensure that the vision and values of BEST are faithfully upheld, clearly communicated and revisited, delivering an ethos and culture of ambition that enables pupils and staff to excel ○ Hold the Principal to account and ensuring that the BEST approach to delivering progress and attainment, in which a minimum expectation for all pupils of being in the top 50% nationally, with an aspiration to be in the top 20% is strictly followed ○ Monitoring the use of resources to ensure best value⁸

⁷ At least one non-executive member of the Finance committee, and the Audit and Risk Committee should have relevant financial and audit assurance experience to fully interrogate financial data and hold executive leaders to account. (*Source: Academy Trust Handbook*)

⁸ All Standing Committees have terms of reference, proposed by the Committee Chair/Convenor and agreed by committee members. Terms of Reference follow guidance provided in this Handbook and may be amended by the Board.

BEST Executive Leadership Team (ELT)

Chief Executive Officer

Objectives

The CEO is appointed by the Board. He is the Accounting Officer and leads the ELT. The CEO has the delegated responsibility to ensure that the guiding values of BEST are faithfully upheld, communicated and revisited. It is the CEO's responsibility to ensure that the Board is appropriately informed through agreed mechanisms⁹.

Director of Education/Deputy CEO

Objectives

The DoFE is appointed by CEO in consultation with the Board to fulfil the following delegated objectives.

- To provide strategic leadership, clear direction and effective management for educational performance, inclusion and wellbeing (including cost-effective staffing structures) across all BEST academies
- To develop BEST-wide strategies (including curriculum-led financial planning) and procedures for improving outcomes for all pupils in BEST academies
- To lead, develop and grow the BEST improvement team, supporting BEST academies and academies across Bedfordshire.

Key Responsibilities

Provide strategic leadership for educational performance, standards and effectiveness across all BEST academies

- Deliver and communicate BEST's vision of all academies achieving a minimum Ofsted inspection Expected grade in all areas, with 30% achieving an Exceptional grade in all areas. Outcomes in every academy/nursery will be above the 50% percentile with half of outcomes being above the 25% percentile
- Create an environment where staff are supported and challenged so that high performance is the norm and well-being is being promoted
- Continue to improve and develop the BEST performance and well-being culture, analysing trends and developing interventions to raise standards and pursue excellence in all areas of academy performance
- Monitor and evaluate teaching and learning across BEST and liaise with appropriate Senior Leaders to ensure development areas are addressed appropriately and expediently.

Deliver BEST-wide strategies and procedures to improve outcomes for all pupils in BEST academies

- Deliver a range of effective quality assurance mechanisms and compliance systems which lead to continued improvement across BEST including Safeguarding
- Ensure a consistent and continuous focus on student achievement, using data to track and monitor the progress in every pupil's learning, and across BEST, analysing academy data and alerting the Principal and CEO to any underperformance
- Deliver a BEST approach to academy review including the organisation of whole academy (including cost-effective staffing structures and curriculum led financial planning), subject and aspect reviews in conjunction with Principals.

Lead, develop and grow BEST Education Services and Academy Improvement team

- Lead and manage BEST Education Services and Academy Improvement Team, ensuring strategic focus and high outcomes
- Keep up to date with major developments and changes in education and develop specific expertise within the trust as required, weaving this into succession planning in each academy and across the Trust
- Produce a Growth Plan for the BEST Academy Improvement Team, annually.

Deputising for CEO

- Take on extra responsibilities as appropriate and delegated by the CEO
- Represent BEST externally
- Attend activities as the CEO and/or BEST representative and uphold the highest standards for the Trust.

⁹ For a list of the CEO key responsibilities please see page 9

Chief Financial Officer
Objectives
The CFO is appointed by CEO in consultation with the Board to fulfil the following delegated objectives. • To ensure the highest standards of financial management • To ensure public funds are used as intended by Parliament • To ensure rigorous procedures for preparing and monitoring financial plans • To ensure appropriate financial arrangements operate day to day • To ensure effective internal controls • To ensure the Accounting Officer and Board of Trustees are appropriately informed through agreed mechanisms.
Key Responsibilities
Effective deployment of financial resources
• Ensure financial sustainability and sufficient reserves – minimum 5% of GAG funding – to support academy Improvement initiatives/projects • Ensure financial planning establishes sustainability of BEST through accurate budgeting, forward planning and regular monitoring • To liaise with BEST's appointed auditors and ensure the preparation of statutory accounts • Ensure BEST is able to meet short term financial obligations • Ensure financial systems in place provide efficient integrated processes • Provide professional advice and support to staff/LCBs/Trustees.
Compliance and reporting
• Ensure compliance with external statutory regulations – Companies Act, Charities Act, HMRC and DfE • External audit – maintain accurate accounting records and prepare an annual report and financial statements • Internal Scrutiny – delivering assurance that the Trust's financial systems, controls, transactions and risks are sound and implemented • Monthly management reporting to the Principals, Accounting Officer and members of the Finance Committee and, Audit and Risk Committee • Attend and report to the Finance Committee, and Audit and Risk Committee on matters of probity and potential risk • Financial management reports for Trustees board meetings.
Managing central and local finance staff
• Provide leadership and technical expertise • Line managing central finance team • Direct and provide support and training for local finance staff.

Chief Operations Officer
Objectives
The COO is appointed by the CEO in consultation with the Board to fulfil the following delegated objectives: • To develop, implement and communicate a BEST Growth Strategy and Operating Plan • To improve Governance across BEST • To ensure Central Services are providing high quality and value for money support to academies • To ensure the Trust has highly effective systems for operational effectiveness and compliance • To deputise for the CEO
Key Responsibilities
Grow and Develop BEST
• Deliver and communicate BEST's vision of 12 academies (9000 pupils) and five nurseries, within a two-tier structure • Integrate new academies into BEST • Oversee strategic engagement with external stakeholders, including the involvement of parents, academies and communities.
Improve Governance
• Ensure effective governance across the Trust, particularly at LCB level • Deliver appropriate training and support for governance • Lead on evaluations, benchmarking and accreditation.
Effective management of central services
• Ensure core functions such as HR, IT support, marketing and communications, estates and capital developments are highly effective, compliant and work to support academies • Provide excellent value for money from new and existing service provision including market testing • Evolve to reflect and support academy needs • Overall responsibility for risk management, including the oversight and presentation of the Risk Register to the Board of Trustees.
Operational Effectiveness
• Ensure compliance with all appropriate statutory functions e.g. Health and Safety, GDPR/Data Protection and HR • Monitor operational efficiency across all areas of operational control and seeking service improvements • Provide sources of external support and funding to improve effectiveness and capacity. • Ensure that arrangement for insurance cover are in place and adequate • Notify the Audit and Risk Committee on any eventuality that could affect the Trust's insurance.

Local Committees of the Board (LCBs)

Local Committees of the Board connect the Board to their local academies and communities, ensuring that Board decisions are well-informed by local context and there is meaningful engagement with parents and local communities. The core functions of the LCB are:

- ensuring the vision and values of BEST are faithfully upheld and clearly communicated, delivering an ethos and culture of ambition that enables pupils and staff to excel
- holding the Principal to account and ensuring that the BEST approach to delivering progress and attainment, in which a **minimum expectation for all pupils of being in the top 50% nationally, with an aspiration to be in the top 20%** is strictly followed
- balance budgets and monitor the resources to ensure best value

Key Responsibilities

Vision, Strategy and Strategic Objectives – Executive Lead – Alan Lee

- Champion BEST's vision and values throughout the academy and wider community, nurturing a culture of consistent high expectations from all
- Support, monitor and challenge the Principal against targets set by BEST for the academy
- Regular community engagement, ensuring that systematic arrangements are in place to hear and respond to the voices of all stakeholders.

Governance (LCBSs)¹⁰¹¹ – Executive Lead – Mark Liddiard

- Chair will provide reports and updates to the BEST Board as required, with a minimum annual report and termly updates via the LCB Chairs Forum
- Maintain a clear and up to date record of all LCB members, notifying BEST of the need to recruit new local committee members
- Appoint from its number local committee members with specific link responsibilities (e.g. safeguarding, pupil premium etc.)
- Conduct annual self-effectiveness/skills audit reviews to identify training requirements and ensure robust governance at academy-level.

Finance – Executive Lead – Stephen Walker

- Monitor the use of resources to ensure best value, ensure that robust curriculum-led financial planning is in place and adequate contingency and reserves are available for capital expenditure and strategic planning
- Ensure appropriate use and probity of targeted funding, such as pupil premium, SEND and sports premium funding
- Maintain a register of business and personal interests.

Staff and HR – Executive Lead – Mark Liddiard

- Support with the appointment/appraisal of the academy Principal
- Ensure an appropriate costed staffing structure is in place and that high quality CPD aligned to the curriculum is made available to staff
- Ensure compliance with BEST HR policies, taking-into-account the workload and well-being of staff
- Hold senior leaders to account against academy targets.

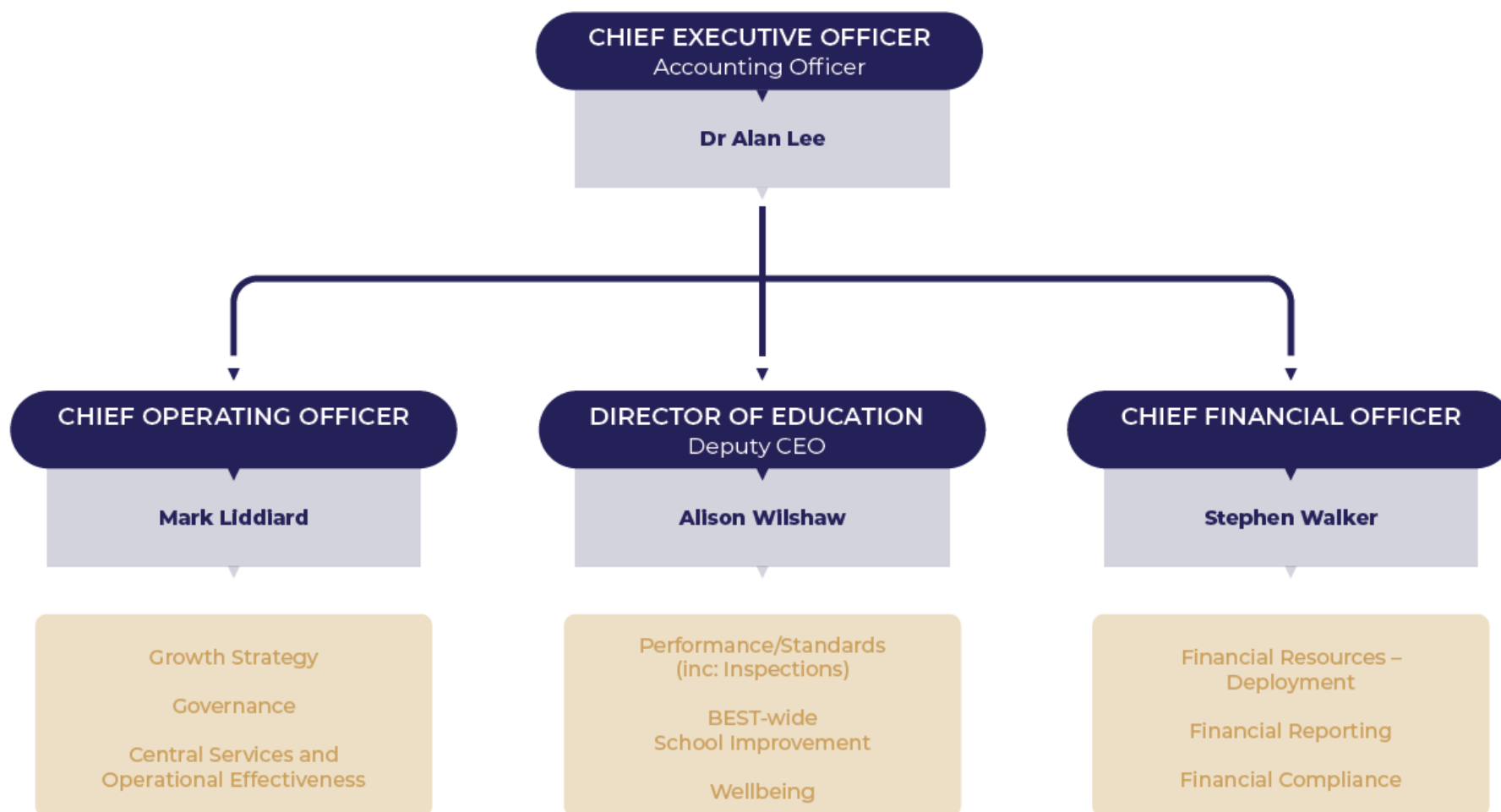
Quality of Education – Executive Lead – Alison Wilshaw

- Involvement in the construction/approval of both the Academy Improvement Plan and Self-Evaluation documents
- Ensure the curriculum intent and implementation are embedded securely and consistently across the academy
- Monitor the performance of the academy with particular respect to the progress and attainment of individuals and Groups (including the most disadvantaged and SEND), pupil well-being and staff appraisal.

¹⁰ All LCB members, including the Chair and Vice Chair, will be appointed by BEST. The LCB must include a minimum of two elected parent representatives and may include a Principal/representative from another BEST academy, subject to agreement.

¹¹ The model for LCBs contained in Appendix 13, Page 58. A degree of variation from this may be employed following approval from the COO.

OPERATIONAL STRUCTURE CHART



Appendix 1: Scheme of Delegation

Introduction

The Scheme of Delegation (known as 'Scheme' hereafter) sets out the delegated powers between the different bodies involved in the governance and operation of the Bedfordshire Schools of Trust (BEST). The different bodies include:

- a. Members
- b. Board of Trustees
- c. Board Sub-Committees
- d. Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Accounting Officer
- e. Chief Operations Officer (COO)
- f. Local Committees of the Board (LCBs)
- g. Principals (Ps).

The delegated powers are broken down into different levels in line with BEST's principles of governance, leadership and operations. The delegated autonomy for individual schools is aligned with the need for BEST to fulfil its charitable and corporate responsibilities to the Department for Education (DfE), Charities Commission, HMRC and Companies House.

The different levels of delegated power are listed as:

- a. R = Responsible
- b. A = Accountable
- c. C = Consulted
- d. S = Support
- e. I = Informed¹²

The Scheme should be read in conjunction with:

- a. the Terms of Reference for the relevant body
- b. the Job Roles for the positions referenced
- c. Financial Scheme of Delegation
- d. BEST Policy Cycle
- e. BEST Quality Assurance Calendar.

¹² In cases where delegated powers sit with more than one body, reading below left to right, the first mentioned body has seniority.

1. Scheme of Delegation								
1. Vision, strategy and strategic objectives. Executive Lead: Alan Lee								
Ref	Decision	Delegation						
		Members	Board	Standing Committees	CEO	COO	LCBs	School Principal
1.1	Setting BEST's vision, strategy and strategic objectives (BEST Improvement Plan, in the agreed format)		A	C	R	S	S	S
1.2	Championing BEST's vision, values and strategic objectives	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
1.3	Regular engagement with key (internal) stakeholders	A	I	I	S	R	S	S
1.4	Setting school vision, strategy and strategic objectives (School Improvement Plan, in the agreed format)		A	I	S	S	A	R
1.5	Regular engagement with the school ¹³ community	A	I	I	S	S	A	R
1.6	Lead on BEST's Communications (inc: Public Relations) Strategy		A	C	C	R	S	S
1.7	Lead on the school's Communications (inc: Public Relations) Strategy, aligned to BEST's vision and values		A	I	S	A	A	R
1.8	Determine the scope of shared services to be delivered by BEST		A	C	R	C	I	C
1.9	Consider requests from schools to join BEST, leading on due diligence processes as required		A	C	R	C	I	I
1.10	Promote well-being, equality, diversity and tolerance amongst staff and students		A	S	R	S	A	R
1.11	Set and approve amendments to BEST's admissions policy		A/R	I	S	S	S	S

¹³ In all cases, the term 'school' also includes 'nursery'.

2. Scheme of Delegation

2. Governance. Executive Lead: Mark Liddiard

Ref	Decision	Delegation						
		Members	Board	Standing Committees	CEO	COO	LCBs	School Principal
2.1	Board member monitoring (inc: provision of training, support, recruitment and succession planning)		A	I	R	S	S	S
2.2	LCB member monitoring (inc: provision of training, support, recruitment and succession planning)		A	I	S	R	A	S
2.3	Provide reports and updates to the Board, including annual report		A	I	I	S	R	C
2.4	Members: appoint/remove	A	I	I	I	I	I	I
2.5	Trustees: appoint/remove	A	R	C	C	I	I	I
2.6	LCB Chair: appoint/remove		R	I	C	S	I	I
2.7	LCB Members: appoint/remove		R	I	C	S	C	C
2.8	Governance Professional to Trustees: appoint/remove		C	C	R	C	I	I
2.9	Governance Professional to LCBS: appoint/remove		I	I	C	C	C	R
2.10	Maintain a clear and up to date record of all LCB members, their terms of office and notifying BEST of the need to recruit new local committee members		A	I	I	S	R	C
2.11	Conduct annual skills audit to identify training needs		A	I	I	S	R	C
2.12	Articles of Association: review/agree	A	R	C	C	C	I	I
2.13	Governance Handbook (inc: Scheme of Delegation): review/agree		A	C	R	C	C	C
2.14	Governance structure for BEST: establish and review		A	C	R	S	S	S
2.15	Determine BEST-wide and school specific policies, in line with BEST's aligned autonomy model		A	S	R	C	S	C
2.16	Monitor compliance with statutory regulations and BEST's policies ¹⁴		A	S	R	R	S	S
2.17	Auditing and reporting against matters of compliance		A	C	R	R	I	I

¹⁴ Education Policies rest with the CEO and non-education with the COO.

3. Scheme of Delegation

3. Quality of Education (inc: outcomes). Executive Lead: Alison Wilshaw

Ref	Decision	Delegation						
		Members	Board	Standing Committees	CEO	COO	LCBs	School Principal
3.1	Evaluate and report on progress against BEST's strategic priorities		A	A	R	S	S	I
3.2	Present up to date: school self-evaluation, school improvement plans, curriculum led finance models and staffing structures		A	A	S	S	A	R
3.3	Agree, monitor and report on progress against BEST-wide key outcome targets for all students ¹⁵		A	A	R	S	S	S
3.4	Report on progress against targets set in the school SEF		A	A	S	S	A	R
3.5	Agree, monitor and report on progress against school outcomes targets for all students		A	A	S	S	A	R
3.6	Discharge duties in respect of students with SEND		A	A	I	S	A	R
3.7	Provision of student and staff well-being programmes throughout the academic year		A	A	S	S	A	R
3.8	Ensure a BEST-wide Safeguarding structure is in place, with designated Safeguard Trustee, policy framework and annual external audits for all schools		A	A	R	C	I	I
3.9	Supporting pupils with medical needs and ensuring adequate provision is in place, including trained staff and resources		A	A	S	S	A	R
3.10	Provide a full suite of CPD and leadership opportunities through the BEST School Improvement Team		A	A	R	C	S	S
3.11	Ensure the continuing growth and success of the BEST School Improvement Team		A	A	R	C	S	C
3.12	Determine that a school should be a BEST Cause for Concern		A	A	R	C	I	I

¹⁵ All students include the most disadvantaged, the most able and SEND

4. Scheme of Delegation

4. Finance. Executive Lead: Stephen Walker

Ref	Decision	Delegation						
		Members	Board	Standing Committees	CEO	COO	LCBs	School Principal
4.1	Establish and review the Financial Scheme of Delegation annually		A	A	R	I	I	I
4.2	External auditors: appoint/remove	R	A	A	S	I	I	I
4.3	Agree BEST funding model and financial strategy to support delivery of key priorities		A	A	R	I	I	I
4.4	Agree budget plan to support delivery of school key priorities		A	A	R	S	I	C
4.5	Review and approve BEST-wide procurement strategies		A	A	R	S	I	I
4.6	Receive and respond to external auditors' report		A	A	R	S	I	I
4.7	Submit annual report and accounts, including accounting policies, signed statement of regularity, propriety and compliance incorporating governance statement demonstrating value for money		A	A	R	I	I	I
4.8	Approval of strategies for ensuring financial control, regularity and probity in spend of public funds		A	A	R	S	I	I
4.9	Plan manage and monitor monthly expenditure and financial reports, and identify actual or potential items of budget overspend/underspend		A	A	C	I	A	R
4.10	Monitor the use of resources to ensure best value, ensuring that robust curriculum-led financial planning is in place and adequate contingency and reserves – 5% of GAG funding – are available for capital expenditure and strategic planning		A	A	C	I	A	R
4.11	Ensure appropriate use and probity of targeted funding, such as pupil premium, SEND and sport premium funding		A	A	C	I	A	R
4.12	Maintain a school-based register of business and personal interest		A	A	C	I	A	R

5. Scheme of Delegation

5. Staff and HR. Executive Lead: Mark Liddiard

Ref	Decision	Delegation						
		Members	Board	Standing Committees	CEO	COO	LCBs	School Principal
5.1	CEO: appoint/remove		A	A	I	I	I	I
5.2	CEO: appraisal/pay		A	A	I	I	I	I
5.3	COO: appoint/remove		A	A	R	I	I	I
5.4	COO: appraisal/pay		A	A	R	I	I	I
5.5	Central Team: appoint/remove		A	A	R	C	I	I
5.6	Central Team: appraisal/pay		A	A	R	C	I	I
5.7	Central Team: CPD/wellbeing		A	S	C	R	I	I
5.8	Principal: appoint/remove		A	A	R	C	S	I
5.9	Principal: appraisal/pay		A	A	R	I	S	I
5.10	Principal: CPD/wellbeing		A	S	R	C	S	S
5.11 ¹⁶	School staff: appoint/remove		A	I	I	I	C	R
5.12	School staff: appraisal/pay/allowance's		A	I	I	I	C	R
5.13	School staff: CPD/wellbeing		A	I	I	S	C	R
5.14	Agree terms and conditions of employment		A	A	R	C	I	C
5.15	Agree BEST staffing structure		A	A	R	C	I	C
5.16	Agree school staffing structure		A	I	C	S	A	R
5.17	Review and agree BEST-wide HR Policies, including staff appraisal and pay progression		A	A	R	C	C	C
5.18	Lead negotiations with Trade Unions on the development of consistent HR policies and procedural changes		A	A	C	R	S	S

¹⁶ Any documentation relating to new/changing pay contracts must be signed by the Principal

6. Scheme of Delegation

6. Estates. Executive Lead: Mark Liddiard

Ref	Decision	Delegation						
		Members	Board	Standing Committees	CEO	COO	LCBs	School Principal
6.1	Maintain a central property asset register, including asset evaluation		A	A	S	R	S	S
6.2	Maintain a central property conditions database, delivering capital improvement projects, in line with the agreed methodology utilising the Schools Condition Allocation (SCA)		A	A	S	R	S	S
6.3	Maintain school premises for routine condition, repair and decorating utilising the school budget and Devolved Formula Capital (DFC)		A	A	S	S	S	R
6.4	Ensure compliance with all appropriate statutory functions e.g. Health and Safety, fire and asbestos risk assessments etc.		A	A	S	R	S	R
6.5	Ensure best value through effective procurement and contract assessment (inc: educational, commercial and contractual legal advice)		A	A	C	R	I	C

7. Scheme of Delegation

7. Other. Executive Lead: Alan Lee

Ref	Decision	Delegation						
		Members	Board	Standing Committees	CEO	COO	LCBs	School Principal
7.1	Responsible for handling and monitoring of complaints ¹⁷		A	I	A	R	R	S
7.2	To review permanent exclusions, considering whether to uphold the Principal's decision or to direct reinstatement of excluded student		A	I	R	I	A	S
7.3	Responsible for monitoring and developing the school's links with the community, parents, carers and guardians		A	I	I	A	A	R

¹⁷ All settings must notify the Trust immediately of any complaints which have been escalated to Ofsted and share a copy of all relevant reports

Standing Committees/Abbreviations

Performance and Wellbeing Committee (as required forms a sub-committee to deal with related HR matters)

CEO – Chief Executive Officer (and Accounting Officer)

Executive¹⁸ delegation to:

- a. Chief Operations Officer - Operations
- b. Chief Financial Officer – Finance
- c. Director of Education – Education
- d. Governance Professional to the Board – Governance

COO – Chief Operating Officer

Executive delegation to:

- a. Compliance Manager – Compliance
- b. Operations Manager - Operations
- c. Communications Manager – Communications

CFO – Chief Financial Officer

Executive delegation to:

- a. Finance team – Finance

DfE – Director of Education

Executive delegation to:

- a. Director of Training and Professional Development
- b. Director of English
- c. Director of Mathematics
- d. Director of Science
- e. Director of SEND & Safeguarding
- f. Lead Teachers
- g. Commissioned Wellbeing Coach
- h. SI Data Manager

¹⁸ See job roles for positions referred to here.

APPENDIX 2: Financial Scheme of Delegation

1: Scheme of Financial Delegation	
1. 1. Powers and Duties Reserved for the <u>Board of Trustees</u>	
General	
1.1	Approval of a written scheme of delegation of its financial powers and duties to its Finance Committee, the Chief Executive Officer, the trusts Chief Financial Officer and other staff. The Board must approve a written scheme of delegation of financial powers that maintains robust internal controls and that is reviewed annually, and immediately when there has been a change in trust management or organisational structure. The scheme of delegation should be operated in conjunction with the Financial procedures and regulations of BEST.
Budgets/Budgetary Control	
1.2	Ensure the trust's assets and funds are used only in accordance with legislation, their articles of association, their funding agreement and the Academies Trust Handbook
1.3	Formally approving the annual Trust budget
1.4	Considering budgetary control reports from the Finance Committee at every meeting, with relevant explanations and documentation where required
1.5	Authorisation of all virements in excess £250 000 between budget headings. Details of all virements approved and authorised by the Finance Committee are to be formally notified to the Board of Trustees
Purchasing	
1.6	Maintenance of a Register of Pecuniary and Business Interests for all Members, Trustees, Local Committee Members and Trust staff with financial responsibilities
1.7	Authorisation of the award of tenders above £250 000
Income	
1.8	Authorisation of the write off of debts not collectable (the Secretary of State's prior approval is also required if debts to be written off are above the value set out in the Academies Trust Handbook)
Security of Assets	
1.9	Authorisation of the disposal of individual items of equipment and materials that have become surplus to requirements, unusable or obsolete with a residual value in excess of £20 000
Accounts and Audit	
1.10	Members must appoint an auditor to give an opinion on whether their annual accounts present a true and fair view of the trust's financial performance and position. Trusts should retender their external audit contract at least every five years.
1.11	Approval of the audited financial statements
1.12	Informing the DfE if it suspects any irregularity affecting resources.

2: Scheme of Financial Delegation

2. 2. Powers and Duties Reserved for the Finance Committee

General

2.1	Exercising the powers and duties of the Board in respect of the financial administration of the Trust, except for those items specifically reserved for the Board of Trustees and those delegated to the Chief Executive Officer, and other staff
2.2	Reporting on decisions taken under delegated powers to the next meeting of the Board of Trustees

Budgets/Budgetary Control

2.3	Reviewing the annual Trust budget and recommending its acceptance, or otherwise to the Board of Trustees
2.4	Considering budgetary control reports on the Trusts financial position at every meeting, taking appropriate action to contain expenditure within the budget and report to the Board of Trustees
2.5	Reviewing the virement of sums between budget heads over £100 000 and up to £250 000 as approved and authorised by the Chief Executive Officer and Chief Financial Officer, which are to be formally notified to the Finance Committee who shall minute the notification
2.6	Approving virements between budget headings of over £100 000 and up to £250 000
2.7	Reporting to the Board of Trustees all significant financial matters and any actual or potential overspending

Purchasing

2.8	Authorising the award of orders and contracts over £100 000 and up to £250 000
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Income

2.9	Authorisation to write off debts not collectable between £10 000 and up to £45 000 per single transaction (the secretary of state's prior approval is also required if debts to be written off are above the value set out in the Academy Trust Handbook.)
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Security of Assets

2.10	Authorising the disposal of individual items of equipment and materials that have become surplus to requirements, unusable or obsolete with a residual value above £20 000 and reporting such authorisations to the Board of Trustees
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Accounts and Audit

2.11	Reviewing the draft financial statements and external audit reports and highlighting any significant issues to the Board of Trustees
2.12	Receiving the reports of the auditor on the use of resources, systems of internal financial control, and discharge of financial responsibilities and highlighting any significant issues to the Board of Trustees
2.13	Receiving annual reports from independent auditors on our internal scrutiny
2.14	Monitoring outcomes of any internal scrutiny reviews that are undertaken.

3: Scheme of Financial Delegation

3. Powers and Duties Reserved for the Chief Executive Officer

General

- | | |
|-----|---|
| 3.1 | The Chief Executive Officer has delegated powers and functions in respect of internal organisation, management and control of the Trust, the implementation of all policies approved by the Board of Trustees and for the direction of teaching and the curriculum. |
|-----|---|

The Chief Executive Officer shall be responsible for:

Budgets/Budgetary Control

- | | |
|-----|---|
| 3.2 | Reviewing income and expenditure reports and highlighting actual or potential overspending to the Finance Committee |
| 3.3 | Approving virements between budget headings of up to £100 000 and reporting such approval to the Finance Committee |

Financial Management

- | | |
|-----|--|
| 3.4 | Ensuring the arrangements for collection of income, ordering of goods and services, payments and security of assets are in accordance with the Financial Regulations |
|-----|--|

Purchasing

- | | |
|-----|---|
| 3.5 | Authorising orders and contracts up to £100 000 |
| 3.6 | Ensuring that all contracts and agreements conform to the Financial Regulations |

Payroll and Personnel

- | | |
|-----|---|
| 3.7 | Approval/veto of proposals and authorisation of changes to the Trust's establishment |
| 3.8 | Ensuring there is an equitable remuneration policy that recognises responsibility, skills, experience and diversity and delivers value for money to the Trust |
| 3.9 | Ensuring payroll processes are delivering timely and accurate payments to staff |

Income

- | | |
|------|--|
| 3.10 | Authorisation to write off debts not collectable up to £10 000 per single transaction (the secretary of state's prior approval is also required if debts to be written off are above the value set out in the Academies Trust Handbook.) |
|------|--|

Security of Assets

- | | |
|------|--|
| 3.11 | Ensuring that there are annual independent checks of assets and the asset register |
| 3.12 | Ensuring that proper security is maintained at all times for all buildings, furniture, equipment, vehicles, stocks, stores, cash, information and records etc. under his/her control |

Accounts and Audit

- | | |
|------|---|
| 3.13 | The operation of financial processes, ensuring that adequate operational controls are in place and that the principles of internal control are maintained |
| 3.14 | Ensuring ongoing in-year QA processes are in place via independent scrutiny and internal checks. |

4: Scheme of Financial Delegation

4. Powers and Duties Reserved for the Chief Financial Officer

The CFO shall be responsible for the strategic financial planning in conjunction with the CEO and Executive Principals relating to:

Budgets/Budgetary Control

4.1	Supporting Principals with the budgeting process and presenting the annual draft budget plan for consideration and approval by the Finance Committee and Board of Trustees
4.2	Monthly monitoring of expenditure and income against the approved budget and submitting reports on the Trusts financial position to every meeting of the Finance Committee and at least 6 times a year to the Board of Trustees. Any actual or potential overspending representing a financial risk to the Trust shall be reported to the Audit and Risk Committee
4.3	Approving virements between budget headings up to a value of £100 000 and reporting such approval to the Finance Committee
4.4	Authorising requests for expenditure from reserves up to £10 000 where the amount of the request does not reduce the reserves below the required minimum of 5% of GAG Funding. All spending requests from reserves above £10 000 must be considered by the Finance Committee

Purchasing

4.5	Ensuring that the individual academies are maintaining a register of formal contracts entered into, amounts paid and certificates of completion and are retaining the quotes obtained for goods, works and services. Whilst overall responsibility for this sits with the CFO, maintenance of such records is delegated to the individual Academy Principals supported by their Local Finance Assistants. The Trust Central Team contracts register is jointly prepared by the COO and CFO.
4.6	Ensuring that all correct invoices are duly certified by authorised staff before payments
4.7	Ensuring the appropriate division of duties between staff responsible for processing orders, receiving deliveries and processing payments
4.8	Authorising orders and contracts up to £100 000

Payroll and Personnel

4.9	Authorising the monthly payroll for the central staff and for other locations if necessary
4.10	With the CEO, jointly authorising any changes to the staff structures in the individual academies
4.11	Ensuring salaries are calculated correctly and paid only to employees of the Trust
4.12	Authorising any changes in salary to existing staff after consultation with the CEO

Banking Arrangements

4.13	Maintaining proper records of accounts and reviewing monthly bank reconciliations
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Accounts and Audits

4.14	The operation of financial processes within the Trust, ensuring that adequate operational controls are in place and that the principles of internal control are maintained
4.15	Ensuring that full, accurate and up to date records are maintained in order to provide financial and statistical information
4.16	Ensuring that all records and documents are available for audit by the appointed external auditors

5: Scheme of Financial Delegation

5. Powers and Duties Reserved for all Other Staff

Members of staff with delegated responsibilities should be aware that these must be exercised in accordance with Financial Regulations.

Academy Principals and Nursery Managers:

5.1	Setting their annual balanced budget
5.2	Authorising monthly payroll, CFO can authorise in the Principals' or Nursery Managers absence
5.3	Checking and certifying monthly statements of expenditure against their delegated budgets
5.4	Reporting any errors or irregularities to the Trust CEO and CFO. Any actual or potential overspend shall also be reported to the CEO and CFO

Delegated Budget Holders:

5.5	Authorising order requisitions provided they are within the scope and remaining balance of their delegated budget
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Finance Manager and Finance Co-ordinators

5.6	Provides support to the CFO and Finance Assistants in carrying out their responsibilities to ensure a consistent approach across the trust, ensures transactions are recorded accurately, does monthly monitoring checks and provides advice, training and cover
5.7	Responsible for day to day transactions and reporting for the executive account, reconciling payroll control accounts, managing capital income and expenditure, recording fixed assets and depreciation, completing statutory reporting

Finance Assistants

5.8	Ensuring that all income is accurately accounted for and is promptly collected and banked intact
5.9	Ensuring that all expenditure is accurately accounted for and invoices are correctly authorised for payment
5.10	Placing orders
5.11	Keeping all relevant audit paperwork associated with income, expenditure, petty cash, purchase orders, contracts
5.12	Produce at least termly statements of income and expenditure to budget holders
5.13	Produce monthly management accounts
5.14	Checking monthly payroll payments and reporting any errors to the payroll provider. Checking data held by payroll provider matches the academies local accounting system on an annual basis
5.15	Assisting in setting the annual budget.

Security of Assets

The Finance Teams are responsible for:

5.16	Maintaining a permanent and continuous register of all items of furniture, equipment, vehicles and plant. Items over £5 000 are capitalised and added to the Fixed Asset Register
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Information and Communication Systems

The COO is responsible for:

5.17	Maintaining the standards of control for such systems in operation within the Trust to include the use of properly licensed software, and for the security and privacy of data in accordance with the Data Protection Act.
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Delegated Duty	Value	Delegated Authority	Method
Ordering Goods and Services	Up to £5 000	Budget Holder, Principal, Trust CFO or CEO	Selection from preferred supplier list unless agreed otherwise with CFO
	£5 001 to £25 000	Principal, Trust CFO or CEO	Minimum of 3 quotes
	£25 001 to £100 000	Trust CFO or CEO	Minimum of 3 quotes
	£101 000 to £250 000	Finance Committee (FC) or Chair of FC (reported at Board meeting)	Formal tendering process, FTS where appropriate
	Over £250 000	Board of Trustees	Formal tendering process, FTS where appropriate
Contracts (total contract value across term of the contract)	Up to £25 000	Principal, Trust CFO or CEO	Minimum of 3 quotes
	£25 001 to £100 000	Trust CFO or CEO	Minimum of 3 quotes
	£101 000 to £250 000	FC or Chair of FC (reported at Board meeting)	Formal tendering process, FTS where appropriate
	>£250 000	Board of Trustees	Formal tendering process, FTS where appropriate
Expenditure from Reserves	Up to £10 000	Trust CFO or CEO	
	Over £10 000	FC or Chair of FC (reported at Board meeting)	
Signatories for cheques, BACS payment authorisations and other bank transfers	Any	Two signatories from: ○ Trust CEO ○ Trust CFO ○ Trust COO ○ Principals ○ Vice Principals	
Signatories for DfE grant claims and DfE returns	Any	Two signatories from: ○ Trust CEO ○ Trust CFO	
Virement of budget provision between budget heads	Up to £25 000	Principals	
	£25 001 to £100 000	Trust CEO & CFO reporting to the FC	
	£100 001 to £250 000	FC or Chair of FC (reported at Board meeting)	
	Over £250 000	Board of Trustees	
Disposal of Assets	Up to £20 000	CFO	
	Over £20 000	CEO & Board of Trustees	
Write-off of bad debts	Up to £45 000	CEO	
	Over £45 000	Board of Trustees & DfE approval if exceeds ATH delegated limits	
Purchase of an asset through a finance lease		DfE approval	
Purchase or sale of any freehold property		DfE approval	
Granting or take up of any leasehold or tenancy agreement exceeding 3 years		DfE approval	

APPENDIX 3: Schedule of BEST Meetings 2026-27

Meeting Date	Time	Meeting	Location
8 December 2026	12:00pm	AGM – Members & Trustees	BEST House
6 October 2026	10:30am	BEST Trustees' Meeting	BEST House
8 December 2026	10:30am	BEST Trustees' Meeting	BEST House
2 February 2027	10:30am	BEST Trustees' Meeting	BEST House
23 March 2027	10:30am	BEST Trustees' Meeting	BEST House
18 May 2027	10:30am	BEST Trustees' Meeting	BEST House
6 July 2027	10:30am	BEST Trustees' Meeting	BEST House
10 November 2026	9:30am	BEST Finance Committee	Virtual
9 March 2027	9:30am	BEST Finance Committee	Virtual
22 June 2027	9:30am	BEST Finance Committee	Virtual
10 November 2026	10:30am	BEST Audit & Risk Committee (Audit)	Virtual
9 March 2027	10:30am	BEST Audit & Risk Committee	Virtual
22 June 2027	10:30am	BEST Audit & Risk Committee (Budget)	Virtual
17 November 2026	9:00am	BEST Performance & Wellbeing Committee ¹⁹	BEST House
18 November 2026	9:00am	BEST Performance & Wellbeing Committee	BEST House
9 March 2027	12:30pm	BEST Performance & Wellbeing Committee	Virtual
22 June 2027	12:30pm	BEST Performance & Wellbeing Committee	Virtual
22 September 2026	8:30am	BEST Subsidiaries Executive Committee	Virtual
19 January 2027	8:30am	BEST Subsidiaries Executive Committee	Virtual
4 May 2027	8:30am	BEST Subsidiaries Executive Committee	Virtual
22 September 2026	10:00am	BEST Community, Capital & Estates Committee	Virtual
19 January 2027	10:00am	BEST Community, Capital & Estates Committee	Virtual
4 May 2027	10:00am	BEST Community, Capital & Estates Committee	Virtual
17 September 2026	8:00am	BEST Executive Team Meeting	BEST House
22 October 2026	8:00am	BEST Executive Team Meeting	Virtual
26 November 2026	8:00am	BEST Executive Team Meeting	Virtual
21 January 2026	8:00am	BEST Executive Team Meeting	BEST House
25 February 2027	8:00am	BEST Executive Team Meeting	Virtual
25 March 2027	8:00am	BEST Executive Team Meeting	BEST House
6 May 2027	8:00am	BEST Executive Team Meeting	Virtual
17 June 2027	8:00am	BEST Executive Team Meeting	BEST House
4 December 2026	9:30am	Chairs' Forum Meeting	Virtual
5 March 2027	9:30am	Chairs' Forum Meeting	Virtual
18 June 2027	9:30am	Chairs' Forum Meeting	Virtual
17 September 2026	10:30am	Governance Professionals' Forum Meeting	BEST House
22 September 2026	13:00pm	BEST SEND Meeting	Virtual
4 November 2026	13:00pm	BEST SEND Meeting	Virtual
14 January 2027	13:00pm	BEST SEND Meeting	Virtual
2 March 2027	13:00pm	BEST SEND Meeting	Virtual
28 April 2027	13:00pm	BEST SEND Meeting	Virtual
17 June 2027	13:00pm	BEST SEND Meeting	Virtual
16 October 2026	8:00am	BEST Mindfulness Strategy Meeting	BEST House
19 March 2027	8:00am	BEST Mindfulness Strategy Meeting	BEST House
25 June 2027	8:00am	BEST Mindfulness Strategy Meeting	BEST House

¹⁹ All Day Performance & Wellbeing Committee – Includes individual Principal Slots over two days: 17 & 18 November 2026.

Appendix 4: BEST Policy & Statutory Document Schedule

BEST Policies			
POLICY TITLE	OWNER	CATEGORY	REVIEW PERIOD
ABSENCE (LEAVE)	HR	RECOMMENDED	3 yearly
ABSENCE (SICKNESS)	HR	RECOMMENDED	3 yearly
ADMISSIONS ARRANGEMENTS	COMPLIANCE	MANDATORY	Annually
ANTI-BRIBERY	FINANCE	RECOMMENDED	3 yearly
APPRAISAL PROCEDURE FOR SUPPORT STAFF	HR	MANDATORY	3 yearly
APPRAISAL PROCEDURE FOR TEACHING STAFF	HR	MANDATORY	3 yearly
ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) PRINCIPLES & GUIDANCE	COMPLIANCE	RECOMMENDED	Annually
ATTENDANCE (TRUST TEMPLATE)	SI TEAM	MANDATORY	Annually
CAPABILITY PROCEDURE FOR TEACHERS AND SCHOOL SUPPORT STAFF	HR	MANDATORY	3 yearly
CHARGING AND REMISSION	FINANCE	MANDATORY	Annually
CHILD ON CHILD ABUSE	COMPLIANCE	RECOMMENDED	Annually
COMPLAINTS (TRUST LEVEL ONLY)	COMPLIANCE	MANDATORY	Annually
CYBER SECURITY	COMPLIANCE	RECOMMENDED	Annually
DATA PROTECTION (GDPR) POLICY & PRIVACY NOTICES	COMPLIANCE	MANDATORY	3 yearly
DISCRETIONS (LGPS)	FINANCE	MANDATORY	3 yearly
DISCIPLINARY	HR	MANDATORY	3 yearly
ECTE POLICY	SI TEAM	MANDATORY	Annually
EQUALITY POLICY	COMPLIANCE	RECOMMENDED	Annually
FAMILY RELATED LEAVE	HR	RECOMMENDED	3 yearly
FINANCIAL PROCEDURES	FINANCE	MANDATORY	Annually
FLEXIBLE WORKING	HR	RECOMMENDED	3 yearly
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION	COMPLIANCE	MANDATORY	3 yearly
GRIEVANCE POLICY	HR	MANDATORY	Annually
HARASSMENT & BULLYING	HR	Included in grievance policy	
HEALTH & SAFETY	H&S	MANDATORY	Annually
MANAGING ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE AGAINST STAFF	HR	MANDATORY	Annually
ONLINE SAFETY (TRUST TEMPLATE)	COMPLIANCE	RECOMMENDED	Annually

BEST Policies Contd...			
POLICY TITLE	OWNER	CATEGORY	REVIEW PERIOD
PAY POLICY	HR	MANDATORY	Annually
RECRUITMENT & SELECTION	HR	MANDATORY	3 yearly
REDUNDANCY PROCEDURE	HR	MANDATORY	3 yearly
RESERVES	FINANCE	RECOMMENDED	Annually
SAFEGUARDING POLICY (TRUST TEMPLATE)	COMPLIANCE	MANDATORY	Annually
STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT	COMPLIANCE	MANDATORY	Annually
SUPERVISION POLICY (DSL SUPERVISION)	COMPLIANCE	RECOMMENDED	3 yearly
TRAVEL & SUBSISTENCE	HR	RECOMMENDED	3 yearly
WHISTLEBLOWING	HR	RECOMMENDED	3 yearly
TRADE UNION RECOGNITION AGREEMENT (TURA)	COMPLIANCE	RECOMMENDED	3 yearly

Academy Policies			
POLICY TITLE	OWNER	CATEGORY	REVIEW PERIOD
ACCIDENT, INCIDENT AND NEAR MISS REPORTING PROCEDURE/POLICY	SCHOOL	RECOMMENDED UNDER HSE GUIDANCE	Not stated
ALLERGY POLICY	SCHOOL	MANDATORY	Not stated
ANTI-BULLYING	SCHOOL	STRATEGY MANDATORY – CAN BE INCLUDED IN BEHAVIOUR POLICY	Not stated
ATTENDANCE (ADAPTED FROM TRUST TEMPLATE)	SCHOOL	MANDATORY	Annually
BEHAVIOUR IN SCHOOLS	SCHOOL	MANDATORY	Annually
CAREERS – PROVIDER ACCESS STATEMENT (YEAR 7 ONWARD)	SCHOOL	MANDATORY	Annually
CHILD-ON-CHILD ABUSE (ADAPTED FROM TRUST TEMPLATE)	SCHOOL	RECOMMENDED	Annually
CHILD PROTECTION / SAFEGUARDING (ADAPTED FROM TRUST TEMPLATE)	SCHOOL	MANDATORY	Annually
COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE (ADAPTED FROM TRUST TEMPLATE)	SCHOOL	MANDATORY	Annually

Academy Policies Contd...

POLICY TITLE	OWNER	CATEGORY	REVIEW PERIOD
CURRICULUM HEALTH & SAFETY POLICIES – FOR: - DT including food tech (localise and adopt model policy CLEAPPS L260) – Middle and Upper only - Science (localise and adopt model policy CLEAPPS DL223) - Art PE (this can be a handbook rather than policy)	SCHOOL	RECOMMENDED UNDER HEALTH & SAFETY AT WORK ACT 1974, MANAGEMENT OF HEALTH & SAFETY AT WORK REGULATIONS 1999 AND INDUSTRY GUIDANCE	Not stated
EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE (EYFS) POLICIES	SCHOOL	MANDATORY	Varies
EQUALITY INFORMATION AND OBJECTIVES STATEMENT (FOR PUBLICATION) – POLICY PUBLISHED BY TRUST	SCHOOL	MANDATORY	Equality information must be updated and published at least every year. Equality objectives must be updated and published at least every 4 years
FIRE POLICY / FIRE MANAGEMENT PLAN	SCHOOL	RECOMMENDED UNDER REGULATORY REFORM (FIRE SAFETY)– ORDER 2005	Not stated
LOCKDOWN PROCEDURE/POLICY	SCHOOL	RECOMMENDED	Recommended annually
LOOKED AFTER AND PREVIOUSLY LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN	SCHOOL	MANDATORY TO APPOINT DESIGNATED TEACHER – RECOMMENDED POLICY	Recommended annually
MOBILE PHONES IN SCHOOL	SCHOOL	MANDATORY	Not stated
ONLINE SAFETY INC AUP (ADAPTED FROM TRUST TEMPLATE)	SCHOOL	RECOMMENDED	Annually
SCHOOL EXCLUSION	SCHOOL	MANDATORY	Annually
SEX & RELATIONSHIP EDUCATION	SCHOOL	MANDATORY	Annually
SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS	SCHOOL	MANDATORY	Annually (SEN Info Report should also be updated annually)
SUPPORTING PUPILS/STUDENTS WITH MEDICAL CONDITIONS - including first aid and children with health needs who cannot attend school	SCHOOL	MANDATORY	Annually
UNIFORM	SCHOOL	MANDATORY	Annually

Statutory Documents

TITLE	OWNER	CATEGORY	DATE	REVIEW PERIOD
ACCESSIBILITY PLAN	SCHOOL	MANDATORY		3 yearly
CENTRAL RECORD OF RECRUITMENT AND VETTING CHECKS	SCHOOL / TRUST	MANDATORY	Ongoing (live document)	Live document
GOVERNANCE HANDBOOK / SCHEME OF DELEGATION	TRUST		Update issued every Sept	Annually
KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE IN EDUCATION	SCHOOL	STATUTORY GUIDANCE DOCUMENT		
MINUTES OF, AND PAPERS CONSIDERED AT, MEETINGS OF GOVERNING BODY AND ITS COMMITTEES	SCHOOL / TRUST	MANDATORY	Ongoing	N/A
PREMISES MANAGEMENT DOCUMENTS	SCHOOL	MANDATORY	Ongoing (live document)	Annually (varies depending on document)
REGISTER OF BUSINESS & PECUNIARY INTERESTS	SCHOOL / TRUST	MANDATORY	Ongoing (live document)	Recommended annually
REGISTER OF PUPILS' ADMISSION TO SCHOOL	SCHOOL	MANDATORY	Ongoing (live document)	Live document
REGISTER OF PUPILS' ATTENDANCE	SCHOOL	MANDATORY	Ongoing (live document)	Live document
SCHOOL INFORMATION PUBLISHED ON A WEBSITE	SCHOOL / TRUST	MANDATORY	Ongoing (live document)	Live document
WORKING TOGETHER TO SAFEGUARD CHILDREN	SCHOOL	STATUTORY GUIDANCE DOCUMENT		

Appendix 5: BEST Quality Assurance Calendar 2026/2027

BEST Support					Timeline 2026-27											
Function	Lead	Detail	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug		
Strategy	AL	Strategic Objectives and Plans	Implementation						Review		Trustees approve		Issue			
		Scheme of Delegation	Implementation						Review		Trustees approve		Issue			
		School Provision Maps	1st of 3 termly created	Sign off by Chairs & Principals			2nd of 3 termly created	Sign off by Chairs & Principals		3rd of 3 termly created	Sign off by Chairs & Principals					
		Principal meetings														
Governance	ML	LCB Review Meetings														
		Chairs Forum				Meeting			Meeting			Meeting				
		Governance Training	Training commences				Spring Term session	Spring Term 2 session			Summer Term session					
Leadership Succession Planning	AL	Principal appointment, support, appraisal & CPD	Interviews CPD - Annual offer				Mid-year reviews									
	ML	LCB Chair Support, review and CPD	Annual Offer													
	AW	Leadership Qualifications: NPQML/ NPQSL/ NPQH1/NPQEL2	Annual Offer													
Compliance	ML/LL	Admissions		Trustees approve draft policy (Sept '28)	Policy Consultation (if required)		Trustees approve final policy	Submit policy to LA					Review Sept '29 policy			
		BEST Wide Policies (<i>these policies may be reviewed in advance of these dates and go forward to the next Trustees meeting</i>)		Admissions	Financial procedures / reserves	Complaints		Equality / whistleblowing	Absence (leave) / AI guidance / charging & remision / FRL / flexible working / grievance	H&S	Absence (sickness) / cyber security		Data Protection (GDPR) / Pay / attendance / child-on-child abuse / ECTE / managing allegations / online safety / safeguarding / staff code of conduct			
		Trust complaints and monitoring	Trust review and analysis			Report to Trustees										
		School complaints	Principal to report any trends and/or matters of significance to LCB				Principal to report any trends and/or matters of significance to LCB			Principal to report any trends and/or matters of significance to LCB						
		GDPR audits	DPL audit	Principal Check			DPL audit / Trust audits	Principal check	COO report to Trustees		DPL audit	Principal check				
		GDPR link governor	Link governor visit				Link governor visit			Link governor visit						
		Equality & Diversity	Principal report to LCB													
		Equality & Diversity link governor	Link governor visit				Link governor visit			Link governor visit						
		Trust Website Audits	Website audit 1 of 2							Website audit 2 of 2						
		Important Policy Acknowledgements (completed via SmartLog for staff or Governor Hub for governors)														
		Disclosure of Pecuniary Interests (completed via Google form for staff or Governor Hub for governors)														

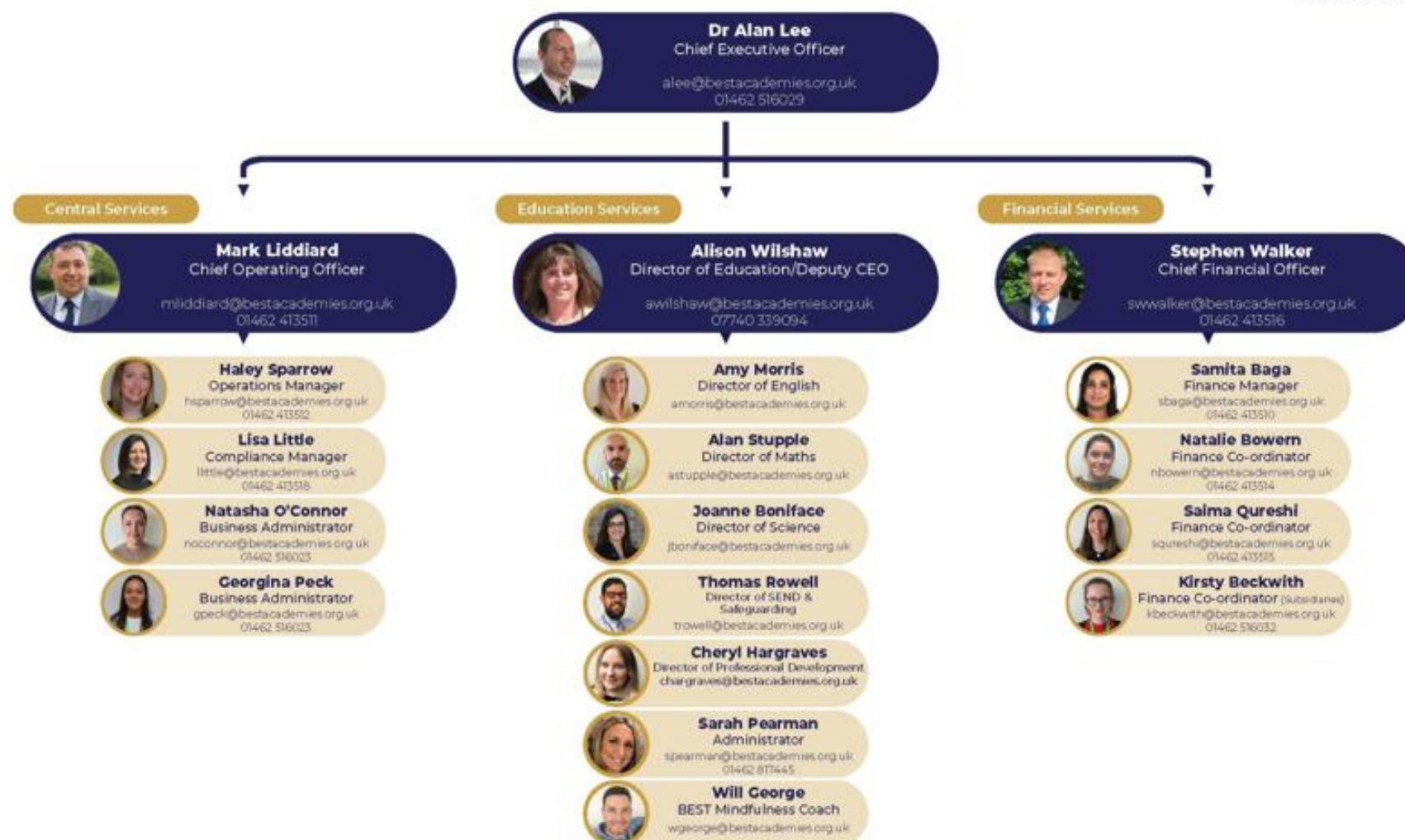
BEST Support			Timeline 2026-27												
Function	Lead	Detail	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	
Safeguarding	AW/TR/LL	Staff Training													
		Link gov visit (each term)	Link governor visit (include SCR compliance)				Link governor visit (include SCR compliance)			Link governor visit (include SCR compliance)					
		School audits and action plans							Safeguarding audits				Report to Trustees		
		Principal SCR check													
SEND	AW/TR	SEND Audits													
Health & Safety	ML / HS	Audits (Principals)	Consolidated report to Trustees		To LCBs on completion		Consolidated report to Trustees		To LCBs on completion		Consolidated report to Trustees	To LCBs on completion			
		PPM Compliance - via SmartLog	Annual Offer												
		Trust audit	Audit carried out by Cousins Safety and reports published for review												
Finance	SW	BEST annual financial process	Year end procedures/preparation of final accounts			Final accounts approved by Trustees		Budget Building			Draft budgets finalised and consolidated	Consolidated budget to Trustees for approval	Budgets to Trust Board for information		
		Budget monitoring and forecast	Report to Trustees	Report to Trustees	Report to Trustees	Report to Trustees	Report to Trustees	Report to Trustees	Report to Trustees	Report to Trustees	Report to Trustees	Report to Trustees	Report to Trustees		
		External audits	End of year audit							Internal Scrutiny	Teachers' Pension Audit		End of year Audit		
		Statutory returns - DfE, HMRC, TP, Companies House	VAT return Q4 and payment Practices Report			Financial Statements to DfE and VAT return Q1	Annual Accounts return to DfE. Financial Statements to Companies House	Payment Practices Report	VAT Return Q2		End of Year Certificate to TP	VAT Return Q3	Budget Forecast Return to ESFA	Budget Forecast Return to DfE and Corporation Tax Return	
		Support, advice, training and cover													
School Improvement / Standards	AW	BEST target setting and monitoring	Post LCB and Appraisal					Data overview - pre Performance Committee				Data overview - pre Performance Committee			
		External reports	Chris Beeden - annual outcomes Trust summary	External SIA Reports - pre-Performance Committee				External SIA Reports - pre-Performance Committee				External SIA Reports - pre-Performance Committee			
		School SEF	Completed by October Half-term					Updated by February Half-term					Review by End of June		
		School SIP	Completed by October Half-term					Updated by February Half-term					Review by End of June		
		Finance-led Curriculum Model													
		School Staffing Structure													
		Stakeholder surveys	Settling in year groups						Wellbeing (by Feb Half-term)			T&L focus (by May Half-term)			
		BEST SI Team CPD Offer	Annual Offer (reviewable on Academy needs)												

BEST Support			Timeline 2026-27											
Function	Lead	Detail	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug
School Estates	ML / HS		Review of Summer works					Prepare SCA/ Conditions Survey plans		Govt funding confirmed	Development of new plans and tendering		Report to Trustees	Summer Capital works
HR	ML / HS	Advice	Annual Offer											
		Case Study Work	Annual Offer											
Information Technology	ML / HS		Performance monitoring meeting	Performance monitoring meeting	Full ICT Board meeting	Performance monitoring meeting	Performance monitoring meeting	Performance monitoring meeting	Full ICT Board meeting	Performance monitoring meeting	Performance monitoring meeting	Full ICT Board meeting	Performance monitoring meeting	
Comms	ML	Ongoing support for schools including training												

Stakeholder surveys are carried out for central finance, operations and school improvement functions in May and reported to Trustees in July

Cross Trust meetings are held with DSLs, DPLs, comms leads, site agents and HR leads once per term

CENTRAL TEAM STRUCTURE CHART



APPENDIX 7: BEST School Improvement Team



SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT TEAM



Dr Alan Lee
Chief Executive Officer

National Leader of
Education



Alison Wilshaw
Director of Education

National Leader of
Education



Cheryl Hargraves
Director of Professional
Development



Amy Morris
Director of English



Alan Stuppel
Director of Maths



Joanne Boniface
Director of Science



Thomas Rowell
Director of SEND &
Safeguarding



Sarah Pearman
School Improvement
Administrator

Lead Practitioners



Emily Adams
Science



Joya Brahmachari-Limb
Performing Arts



Lucy Blackford
EYFSP



Natasha Cooper
PE &
Wellbeing



Michael Craddock
Attendance &
Behaviour



Will George
BEST Mindfulness
Coach



Rob Graves
Science



Jimmy Hart
PE



Jason Hatchell
Geography



Julia Haynes
History



Lisa Oestreicher
MFL



Suze Prendergast
Geography
KS2



Alison Sugden
Wellbeing



Julie Undrell
Maths



Christian Langley
Science
KS2/3/4/5



Alan Lovesey
Geography



Verity Merryweather
English, Dance
and T&L



Hannah Potter
Geography and
T&L



Zoe Russell
PSHE



Zowie Salvatore
Science



Andrew Scott
NPQ ECT and
PSHE



Richard Scott
Behaviour &
Attendance



Jay Szwalbak
PSHE



Justin Togher
Maths KS3/4/5



Emily Wigglesworth
English



SUPPORTING-SHARING-SECURING

All schools and nurseries within BEST benefit from our supporting, sharing and securing model. Support is provided to add value to the excellent provision within our schools and nurseries. This is enriched through the sharing of best practice.

Exceptional outcomes are secured through a rigorous and robust monitoring system, employing a range of experts from both within BEST and trusted partners.

QUALITY ASSURANCE / COMPLIANCE - External safeguarding audits - Compliance with appropriate functions – admissions, single central record - GDPR, H&S, fire and asbestos etc, including Smartlog recording - Website checks - BEST Community, Capital & Estates Committee (<i>Lead: Mark Liddiard</i>) CAPITAL & ESTATES - Asset and property registers - Conditions surveys and project management - Best value through procurement and contract assessment - BEST Community, Capital & Estates Committee (<i>Lead: Mark Liddiard</i>) EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT / SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT - Directors of Education, English, Maths, Science, SEND & Safeguarding. - SLEs/Lead Teachers - BEST Practice Forum: SI networks, Curriculum Development Groups, Moderation Groups, Induction Tutor Support, Early Years Support Group, Nursery Network Group - Provision maps (signed off by Principal/Chair/CEO), staffing structures and curriculum models - Specialist SEND Lead Provision - Equality and Diversity Lead - ECT/ECM Lead for BEST and all of CBC - BEST Performance & Wellbeing Committee	CPD - Targeted courses: OTAP, OTP, CERTSEY, Ofsted training, autism training, MHFA training, RQT programme, New to Head of Department training, Leaders of the Future programme, leading pastoral areas, coaching - NPQs/ECFs - Succession planning/Growing future leaders (including shadowing opportunities) - Mindfulness - BEST Performance & Wellbeing Committee (<i>Lead: Alison Wilshaw</i>) MONITORING PROVISION - Directors of Education, English and Maths: visits, reviews and reports (internal/external), school data (externally collated and analysed), stakeholder surveys and SEF evaluations - CEO and Board Chair: Principal appraisals - BEST Performance & Wellbeing Committee (<i>Lead: Alison Wilshaw</i>) GOVERNANCE SUPPORT - Handbook. BEST-wide and academic-specific policies - Skills audit and targeted training. Access to NGA training - Chairs' Forum, Clerks' Forum and Governor Conference - BEST staff membership of LCBs. LCB minute monitoring - National Governor Mark - BEST Full Board (<i>Lead: Mark Liddiard</i>)
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Appendix 9: Cause for Concern

A BEST Cause for Concern notice may be issued by the CEO in any of the six circumstances below. In which an academy:

- fails to faithfully uphold the vision, values and ethos of BEST
- possesses an Ofsted needs attention, urgent improvement, unmet safeguarding or an DfE notice to improve
- the BEST COO, DofE or CFO identifies the academy as a high-risk academy
- pupil outcomes fall significantly below expectation, as determined by the BEST DofE
- fails to provide monitoring reports and/or fails to stay within agreed expenditure limits and balance budgets
- is not compliant with regard to its statutory obligations.

In such a circumstance, delegated authority may be removed from either/both the Principal/LCB and corrective action will be taken, based on the identified concerns. This action may include consideration by the Board of either/both the Principal/LCB tenure.

Appendix 10: Website Compliance List 2026/27

Document / information for publication	Website	Comment
<u>Annual reports and accounts:</u> • Annual report • Annual audited accounts for last 2 years (publish by 31st Jan) • Memorandum of association • Articles of association • Names of trustees, members, local governors and accounting officers • Funding agreement • Financial notice to improve (if applicable) • Any supplementary funding agreement	Trust & Academy	Academies to have a clear link to the BEST website where this information can be found.
<u>Publication of executive pay</u> Academy trusts must publish the number of employees whose salary and related benefits exceeded £100,000 during the previous academic year ended 31 August. They must present this information in: • an easily accessible form • £10,000 bandings <i>The requirements to publish financial information are set out in the academy trust handbook.</i>	Trust	Academies must have a link to the BEST website where this will be published.
Link to school's page on the Schools Financial Benchmarking Service website	Academy	
The school's name, address and telephone number	Academy	
The name of the Principal	Academy	
The contact details of the Multi-Academy Trust's registered office and a link to the website <i>Including trading disclosure: the registered name of the Academy Trusts; the part of the UK where it is registered (e.g. "England and Wales"); the registered address of the Academy Trust; the fact that it is a charitable limited company; and the registered company number.</i>	Trust & Academy	Academies to have a clear link to the BEST website.
A statement of the school's ethos and values	Academy	
The name and contact details for the Chair of Governors	Academy	
Relevant business and pecuniary interests of trustees, local governors, members and accounting officer (including governance roles at other educational institutions)	Trust & Academy	
Publish up to date details of governance arrangements in a readily accessible format	Trust (Academy link)	All academies must include a clear link to the Trust Governance Structure and Scheme of Delegation on the BEST website
The names of the members of the Multi-Academy Trust	Trust (Academy link)	Academies must have a clear link to the BEST website where this information can be found.

The names of the governors on the LCB and their remit/committees (<i>can be published in a Governance Handbook – a clear link to document and what information can be found must be provided</i>)	Academy	
The structure and remit of: • The members • The board of trustees • Committees • LCBs Including full names of the chair of each	Trust (Academy link)	All academies must have a clear link to the BEST website where this information can be found.
Members of the Trust – for each member who has served at any point over the past 12 months: • Full name • Date of appointment • Who appointed them • Date he/she stepped down (if applicable)	Trust (Academy link)	Academies must have a clear link to the BEST website where this information can be found.
Trustees and LCBs – for each trustee and local governor who has served at any point over the past 12 months: • Full name • Date of appointment • Who appointed them • Term of office • Date he/she stepped down (if applicable)	Trust & Academy	Academies must have a clear link to the BEST website where the information re Trustees can be found.
<u>Attendance records (trustees and LCBs)</u> For trustees – attendance records at board and committee meetings over the last academic year. For local governors – attendance records at LCB meetings over the last academic year.	Trust & Academy	
<u>Admissions Arrangements</u> Academy trusts must publish the admissions arrangements for their schools on their website and keep them there for the whole of the offer year (the school year in which offers for places are made) – in accordance with the School Admissions and Appeals Codes. <i>September admissions – normal point of entry</i> By 15 March each year, the trust must publish on its website the admission arrangements for children who will be starting school at the normal point of entry in September of the following year. It must retain them there for the whole of the academic year in which offers for places are made. The admission arrangements (policy) must explain: • how the trust considers applications for places in each relevant age group (that is, the age group in which children are normally admitted to its schools)	Trust & Academy	

• how many children the trust intends to admit in each relevant age group (known as the published admission number, or PAN) • what a parent or carer needs to do if they want to apply for their child to attend one of the trust's schools • how the trust allocates places if there are more applicants than places available Where applicable, the trust must also explain how (in policy): • a parent or carer of a primary-age child can request that a school delay or defer their child's entry to reception, and the process for requesting admission outside the normal age group • many external applicants a school intends to admit into the sixth form In year admissions – run by CBC – link to CBC in-year application co-ordination scheme. Admission appeals – run by CBC – link to CBC on website for arrangements and timetable. 16 to 19 academies and colleges – <u>should</u> that details of admission arrangements are published. Information should be published a year before the beginning of the academic year to help parents and students make an informed choice, and it is recommended that the arrangements don't change during the year. Include: • open days planned • the process for applying for a place • whether the academy gives priority to applications from pupils enrolled at particular schools		
<u>Admissions consultations</u> – during any consultation on changes to proposed admission arrangements, the following must be published: • A copy of the full proposed admission arrangements including the proposed published admission number (PAN) • Details of the person to whom comments may be sent • The areas on which comments are not sought • Reference to the PAN being higher than in previous years (where applicable)	Trust & Academy	
<u>Equality Information</u> Academies must publish:	Trust & Academy	Trust will produce a diversity and gender pay gap report, and publish this on the

• details of how they comply with the public sector equality duty – updated every year • publish the school's equality objectives – updated at least once every 4 years		BEST website – all academies to provide a clear link to this information on their website.
Gender pay gap report (by 31 st March)	Trust (Academy link)	All academies to provide a clear link to the BEST website.
Name and contact details of SEN Co-ordinator (SENCO)	Academy	
Particulars of educational and welfare provision for pupils with EHC plans and pupils for whom English is an additional language	Academy	
<u>SEN information report</u> Schools must publish an Information Report on their website and should update it <u>annually</u>. Report should contain the arrangements for managing complaints regarding SEND provisions from the parents of pupils with SEND. To comply with section 69 of the Children and Families Act 2014, the report must contain: • the SEN information specified in Schedule 1 to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014 – statutory guidance is available in paragraphs 6.79 to 6.82 of the SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years • additional information about the: ○ arrangements for the admission of disabled pupils ○ steps the school has taken to prevent them disabled pupils being treated less favourably than other pupils ○ facilities it provides to help disabled pupils access the school ○ accessibility plan it has prepared under paragraph 3 of Schedule 10 to the Equality Act 2010 to: ▪ increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum ▪ improve the physical environment to increase the extent to which disabled pupils can take advantage of the educational benefits, facilities or services provided or offered ▪ improve the way disabled pupils can access information that is easily accessible to pupils who are not disabled	Academy	

<u>Pupil premium strategy</u> Academies that receive pupil premium and recovery premium funding must publish a strategy statement by 31 December each year. It must explain: • how the academy is spending its pupil premium funding • the education outcomes which disadvantaged pupils are achieving Academies must publish the statement in the DfE template provided on the pupil premium guidance page. DfE recommends that academies plan their pupil premium spending over 3 years. If they do so, they must still update their statement annually to reflect: • their spending activity for the current academic year • the impact of pupil premium in the previous academic year	Academy	
<u>PE and sport premium for primary schools</u> Schools must publish by 31st July each year: • the amount of premium received • a full breakdown of how it has been or will be spent • the impact of the school has seen on pupils' PE and sport participation and attainment • how the improvements will be sustainable in the future • the percentage of pupils within year 6 cohort that can do each of the following ○ swim competently, confidently and proficiently over a distance of at least 25m ○ use a range of strokes effectively ○ perform safe self-rescue in different water-based situations To be signed off by the <u>Chair</u> (digital reporting tool or school report, whichever is used) <i>Despite the transition to PE and School Sport Partnerships Network, digital expenditure reporting must still be uploaded by 31 July 2026 for 2025/26.</i>	Academy	
<u>Curriculum</u> Academies must publish: Academies must publish their policy on relationships education or relationships and sex education. They should consult parents and carers when developing and reviewing it. It must meet pupils', parents' and	Academy	

carers’ needs, and reflect the community the academy serves. Academies should publish: - the content of the curriculum in each academic year for every subject, including mandatory subjects such as religious education (RE) – this applies even if it is taught as part of another subject or known by another name - information to make parents and carers aware they have the right to withdraw their child from all or part of RE - how parents, carers or other members of the public can find out more about the curriculum Alongside the content of their music curriculum, all academies are expected to publish information about their music development plan. A template is available to support with this. To be published by academic year 2024/25, and update each year for new academic year. Where applicable, they should also publish a list of the: - key stage 1 phonics or reading schemes they use - key stage 4 courses, including GCSEs, available 16 to 19 qualifications they offer Academies must prepare an accessibility plan that sets out how, over time, they will increase the extent to which disabled pupils participate in the curriculum. What academies with 16 to 19 provision should publish Academies with 16 to 19 provision should also publish information on how their curriculum meets the 16 to 19 study programme requirements. <i>INCLUDE THE 3 I’S.</i>		
<u>Remote Education</u> Academies should publish information about their remote education provision on their website.	Academy	
Ofsted reports – publish either a copy of the most recent Ofsted report or a link to the report on the Ofsted website.	Academy	

Academies must publish a link to the school and college performance tables and the academy's performance tables page.	Academy	
<u>Key stage 2 (KS2)</u> - the percentage of their pupils who achieved the expected standard in reading, writing and maths (combined) - the percentage of their pupils who achieved a higher standard in reading, writing and maths (combined) - their pupils' average scaled score in: - reading - maths It will not be possible to calculate key stage 1 to key stage 2 progress measures for the 2023 to 2024 or 2024 to 2025 academic years. There is no key stage 1 baseline available to calculate primary progress measures for these years because of Covid-19 disruption. For the 2023 to 2024 academic year, academies do not have to publish progress scores in reading, writing or maths, as the Secretary of State is not publishing these.	Academy	
<u>Key stage 4 (KS4)</u> - their Progress 8 score - the percentage of their pupils achieving a grade 5 or above in GCSE English and GCSE maths - their Attainment 8 score - the percentage of their pupils staying in education or going into employment after key stage 4 - the percentage of their pupils who were entered for the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) - their EBacc average point score (APS)	Academy	
<u>Key stage 5 (KS5)</u> - progress (value added) measures - attainment measures - retention measures - destination measures	Academy	

They do not have to publish value added measures for the 2022 to 2023 academic year, as the Secretary of State is not publishing these. They do not have to publish English and maths progress measures for the 2022 to 2023 or 2023 to 2024 academic years, as the Secretary of State is not publishing these.		
<u>16-19 bursary fund</u> Publish a statement on website that sets out how the 16-19 bursary fund will be used. This statement should include: • The eligibility criteria for students • The type of support being offered at the school or setting • A supporting statement which explains that the support available to students is via the bursary fund	Academy (with sixth form)	
<u>Careers programme information</u> What secondary academies and 16 to 19 academies must publish Secondary academies and 16 to 19 academies must publish a policy statement to comply with section 42B of the Education Act 1997, known as the ‘provider access legislation’. This statement must set out the circumstances in which they will give providers of technical education and apprenticeships access to <u>year 8 to 13 pupils</u>, as applicable. What secondary academies, 16 to 19 academies and FE colleges should publish Secondary academies, 16 to 19 academies and FE colleges should publish information about how they deliver careers guidance to <u>years 7 to 13</u>, as appropriate to their setting and required by their funding or accountability agreement. For the current academic year, this should include: • the name and contact details of their careers lead • a summary of the careers programme, including details of how young people, parents, carers, teachers and employers can access information about it • how the academy or college measures and assesses the programme’s impact on young people • the date by which it will review this information	Academy	

Statutory guidance on providing careers guidance is available. <i>Guidance update 2025 states requirement for two weeks' worth of work experience should be broken down into:</i> • <i>one weeks' worth of work experience activities in years 7 to 9</i> • <i>one weeks' worth of work experience placement(s) in year 10 and 11.</i> Reference to use of Gatsby Charitable Foundations Benchmarks		
Statutory polices for publication on website:	Academy	All academies must provide a list of BEST published policies on their website together with a link to the BEST website policy page.
Accessibility plan	(Trust for BEST policies)	
Admissions policy including appeals timetable (BEST)		
Attendance policy		
Behaviour policy – <i>including remote education considerations if still applicable</i>		NO trust policies should be uploaded – there should only be a link to the BEST website, unless the policy requires site specific personalisation.
Exclusion policy		
Anti-bullying policy (<i>strategy can be included in behaviour policy</i>)		
Provider access statement – careers (year 7 to 13 pupils only)		Trust will publish the relevant cross BEST policies.
Charging & remission policy (BEST)		
Child protection/safeguarding (using BEST template) – <i>including remote education considerations if still applicable</i>		
Child on child abuse		
Complaints procedure (<i>reference to SEND complaints process to be included in SEN Info Report</i>)		
Early years foundation stage policies (if applicable)		
Equality policy / objectives		
Freedom of information policy (BEST)		
Data Protection (GDPR) & Privacy Notices (BEST)		
Health & Safety (BEST)		
Mobile Phones in School – <i>may be included in other policies</i>		
Looked after & previously looked after children		
Online Safety Policy (including AUA)		
Sex & relationship education policy (<i>consult with parents/carers and pupils in developing and reviewing policy</i>)		
Special education needs policy		
Supporting pupils/students with medical needs (<i>including first aid and children who cannot attend school</i>)		
Uniform (see list below of requirements)		
Whistleblowing (BEST)		
Publication scheme (a requirement of the Freedom of Information Act 2000)	Trust (Academy link)	Academies must provide a link to the BEST website.
School uniform (<i>to be included in policy</i>)	Academy	

The published uniform policy should be easy to understand and, where a school has a school uniform, should: • clearly state whether an item is optional or required • make clear if the item will only be worn at certain times of the year (for example, if it's summer or winter uniform) • make clear whether a generic item will be accepted or if a branded item is required • make clear whether an item can only be purchased from a specific retailer or if it can be purchased more widely • include where second-hand uniform can be purchased		
School opening hours Academies should publish the: • official start time of the compulsory school day • official end time of the compulsory school day • total time this amounts to in a typical week, including breaks but not after-school activities	Academy	
Cookie policy to provide internet users with clear and comprehensive information about the purposes for which the cookie is stored and accessed.	Trust & Academy	
Request for copies – state that paper copies of any information on the website can be provided if necessary.	Trust & Academy	
Name of the member of staff who deals with queries from parents and other members of the public	Trust & Academy	
Parent View link	Academy	

NB. Websites must comply with data protection law if using photographs of individuals or data taken from members of the public. Websites must also observe intellectual property rights if publishing content produced by third parties. Consideration must be given to any photographs uploaded to prevent manipulation by AI (e.g., using lower-resolution images, using group shots where possible, and ensuring image metadata is stripped).

Only statutory information required to be published on an academy website is checked in this audit, other areas of the website are not checked. The Trust will audit academy websites twice yearly. The academy is responsible for ensuring the compliance of the website between audits.

Please note that the contents of reports and policies are not checked during the website audits – just that the report/policy has been published and reviewed within the statutory time scales.

Appendix 11: BEST Local Committee Members' Code of Conduct

As individuals on the Governing Body for each academy we agree to the following and we/will:

- champion the vision, values and ethos of BEST
- engage regularly with the community to hear and respond to the voices of all stakeholders
- adhere to the Seven Principles of Public, established by the Nolan Committee (see appendix 20)
- actively support and challenge the Principals²⁰
- accept collective responsibility for all our decisions; observing complete confidentiality as appropriate
- 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
- consider carefully how our decisions may affect the community and other academies, declaring any conflict of loyalty at the start of any meeting should the situation arise
- take part in an annual review of LCB effectiveness, complete a Local Committee Member Self Audit form, attendance the BEST Governance Bi-Annual Conference and complete a minimum of one specific training course in line with the BEST Governance Skills audit
- attend at least (2/3) of meetings per year, or in the case of LCBs that meet more than 3 times, achieve at least 75% attendance. In the event an individual Committee Member's attendance falls below this, their ability to effectively discharge their duties as a Committee Member will be reviewed with them by the Chair of the Local Committee
- aim to remain current with the national agenda on education, including reading relevant update literature issued by BEST and/or DFE
- record any pecuniary or other business interest (including those related to people we are connected with) that we have in connection with the governing body'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
- act in the best interests of the academy as a whole and not as a representative of any group, even if elected to the governing body
- if we believe this code has been breached, we will raise this issue with the chair and the chair will investigate; the governing body will only use suspension 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 committee member, such as the vice chair will investigate
- seek further support where necessary from the BEST's Governance Advice line accessed via the CEO, Dr Alan Lee, alee@bestacademies.org.uk or 07984 404578 (for Members and Trustees) or Mark Liddiard, mliddiard@bestacademies.org.uk or 07984 003466 (for LCB members).

²⁰ Should the CEO decide that a cause for concern category is to be given to a particular academy, the LCB will work openly and positively with the school improvement/finance to secure rapid correction.

Appendix 12: BEST Chairs' Forum – Terms of Reference

Core Aim:

To ensure that the vision and values of BEST are faithfully upheld, clearly communicated and revisited, delivering an ethos and culture of ambition that enables all pupils and staff in our community to excel.

Overall Purpose and Responsibility:

- To provide the opportunity for LCB members from different academies and Board members to meet
- To facilitate good communications between LCBs and the Board of Trustees
- To offer a discussion forum for challenges to and management of LCBs.

Composition:

- The Board Chair will invite the Chairs – or their nominated representatives - of each LCB
- Board members have an open invitation to attend
- Members of the BEST Executive Team and external advisors will be invited by the Board Chair as deemed appropriate.

Proceedings:

- The forum will meet virtually once a term, usually for 1.5 hours
- Agenda items/papers will be distributed 5 working days in advance of any meetings. One item will be a sharing of best practice by an LCB Chair
- The meeting will be minuted by the Governance Professional to the Board of trustees
- The CEO will report back to the Board on the meeting, attendance and general discussion themes/recommendations for action

Appendix 13: BEST Local Committees of the Board Model

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Context:

Local governing bodies (LCBs) are at the heart of BEST. LCBs are appointed by and report to the Board (which is the legal entity responsible for governance within the Trust). They provide effective day-to-day oversight of BEST academies - by following the LCB Core Functions and LCB Key Responsibilities outlined below and the Scheme of Delegation at Appendix 1 in this document.

LCBs lead on promoting BEST in the community and are responsible for championing BEST's mission, vision and values.

LCB Core functions:

The core functions of the LCB are:

- Ensuring the mission, vision and values of BEST are faithfully upheld and clearly communicated, delivering an ethos and culture of ambition that enables students and staff to excel.
- Holding the Principal to account and ensuring that the BEST approach to delivering progress and attainment, in which the minimum expectation for all students of being in the top 50% nationally, with an aspiration to be in the top 20% is strictly followed.
- Monitoring the use of resources, including finances, to ensure best value.

LCB Key responsibilities:

Vision, ethos and strategic direction (community engagement focus):

(Executive Support – Chief Operations Officer, Mark Liddiard)

- Champion BEST's mission, vision and values throughout the academy and wider community, nurturing a culture of consistent high expectations from all.
- Support, monitor and challenge the Principal against targets set by BEST for the Principal. Chair to support with the appointment/appraisal of the academy Principal.
- Regular community engagement, ensuring that systematic arrangements are in place to hear and respond to the voices of all stakeholders.

Holding leaders to account for the educational performance of the academy and its students:

(Executive Support – Director of Education, Alison Wilshaw)

- Involvement in the construction/approval of both the Academy Improvement Plan and Self-Evaluation documents
- Ensuring that curriculum intent and implementation are embedded securely and consistently across the academy, facilitated by an appropriate staff CPD programme
- Monitoring the performance of the academy with particular respect to the progress and attainment of individuals and groups (including the most disadvantaged and SEND), pupil well-being and staff appraisal
- Ensuring compliance with BEST Safeguarding and HR policies, promoting well-being, equality, diversity and tolerance amongst staff and students
- Monitoring all external reports, ensuring impactful Academy Action Plans are in place

Overseeing the financial performance of the academy and making sure its money is well spent:

(Executive Support – Chief Finance Officer, Stephen Walker)

- Monitoring the use of resources to ensure best value, ensuring:
 - robust curriculum-led financial planning
 - effective costed staffing
 - adequate contingency and reserves – a minimum of 5% GAG funding - are available for capital expenditure and strategic planning
 - communication to Board of Trustees when there are concerns relating to the academy's financial position
 - Ensuring appropriate use and probity of targeted funding, such as pupil premium etc.
 - Maintaining a register of business and personal interests.

Composition and nomination of the Chair

BEST wishes the LCB to usually contain a maximum of 8 members:

- Two Parent LCB members
- The Principal
- One staff LCB member
- A minimum of one and up to four LCB members with a particular expertise, as identified the BEST Skills Audit.²¹

Appointments

The appointment of LCB members will be overseen by the COO and will require the approval of the Board.

Staff and parent members – nominations will be sought from staff and parents for those willing to serve as a member of the LCB. There will be a selection process such as interviews and/or elections against an agreed criterion as part of the appointment process.

LCB members will nominate and select their Chair for each academic year, from 1 September to 31 August for approval by the Board. The selection should take place at the last meeting of the Summer term in the preceding year or at the first meeting of the Autumn term for the current year. The Board Chair and BEST Governance Professional are to be notified within seven days of selection. Where there is more than one nomination for the role of Chair a secret ballot will be arranged by the minute taker, with guidance from the COO where required. The Chair should not be a staff member of the academy.

The BEST Governance Professional will maintain a list of all Chairs, LCB members and their terms of office. The LCB Governance Professional is responsible for providing the BEST Governance Professional with termly updates.

All LCB members are expected to visit the academy at pre-arranged times (including during the school day) to take part in an agreed programme of Member visits focussed around school priorities.

All LCB Members will also be required to complete the annual skills audit and attend the Bi-Annual Governance Conference and identified Governance training opportunities.

Proceedings

(Executive Support, BEST Governance Professional)

- The LCB shall meet at least six times a year.
Dates – including times and venues - for meetings will be published at the start of each year
- 51% of the membership – to include a minimum of one who is not a parent or staff member – is required for a meeting to be quorate
- Agendas will be agreed between the Chair and the Principal and will be published at least a week in advance of each meeting. Standing items shall include:
 - apologies for absence
 - declarations of interest
 - matters arising: safeguarding and GDPR updates
 - community engagement
 - educational performance
 - financial performance
- Minutes will be taken to record the proceedings and decisions of all meetings of the Committee, including recording names of those present and in attendance and, apologies and explanation for those not able to attend. Minutes will be stored on GovernorHub and be monitored by the COO/BEST Governance Professional
- LCB Chairs meet annually with the governance lead who provides feedback to the Board of Trustees
- LCB Chairs will meet with the COO for an annual review of effectiveness in the summer term

²¹ This maximum number may be flexed, through consultation with the COO to ensure the LCB possesses all the prerequisite skills.

Terms of Office

- Staff members will be appointed for a three year period
- Parent members will be appointed for a three year period
- Other members will be appointed for a three year period, subject to evaluation by the LCB and Board
- No member shall serve for longer than nine years unless exceptional circumstances apply.

Evidence sources

BEST Governance Handbook

Performance Committee Reports

SIP and SEF documents

Finance and Audit Reports

Principal Academy Reports

Policies

Appendix 14: Local Committees of the Board: Community Engagement

Local Committees of the Board should ensure effective engagement with stakeholders, as understanding the views and experiences of stakeholders is a crucial part of the governance role, rather than just relying on the reports of the Senior Leaders within the school. If committee members really want to get to know their schools, it is vital that they listen to a range of voices. The committee member, working with the principal, must decide which key indicators they wish to monitor and plan for the process to take place.

The principal and the staff should have trust and confidence in the Local Committee Members' integrity to act in the best interests of the whole school with the pupils at its heart. Trust and confidence are developed when the committee members share responsibility for the work of the school, both good and bad, and take decisions that will lead to improvement in the quality of the school's education provision and pupil performance.

The Committee Members might join in a subject or curriculum review where they listen to the voice of pupils. They might attend a Parents' Evening and speak with parents. However, the most frequently used method of stakeholder engagement is by conducting a survey, which is both quick and meaningful to what you are trying to find out. Bedfordshire Schools Trust (BEST) require that all Local Committees of the Board complete stakeholder surveys throughout each academic year, as stated in the Terms of Reference (Appendix 12), under Key responsibilities - Vision, ethos and strategic direction (community engagement focus). Bullet 3 states: **Regular community engagement, ensuring that systematic arrangements are in place to hear and respond to the voices of all stakeholders.**

The stakeholders (parents, pupils and staff), should each, individually, be surveyed at least once, annually. Therefore, the minimum of three surveys in total would be carried out. The suggestion would be therefore that one a term fits this structure quite naturally.

A quick consideration guide is shown below:

- What area will we examine?
- Which stakeholder are we targeting?
- Who will collect the evidence?
- How and when will it be collected?
- How and when will it be presented to all local committee members?
- What evidence will demonstrate success?
- How will actions be planned, should there need to be any, after the survey?

There are many templates of questions available across the Trust and beyond to help you to carry out these surveys. Please do ask either your Principal or the Director of Education should you need a sample to guide you.

Appendix 15: Local Committees of the Board: Safeguarding Link Governor Role

General Duties

- Maintain oversight and monitor the school's safeguarding systems and procedures
- Champion safeguarding and child protection issues within the school

Compliance with safeguarding guidance

- Ensure that the school is implementing the appropriate policies, including the following:
 - Child protection/safeguarding - Trust template
 - Staff code of conduct
 - Managing allegations of abuse against staff
 - Safeguarding policy – Trust template
 - Child-on-child abuse policy – Trust template
 - DSL supervision policy
 - Children looked after policy
 - Online safety policy including pupil acceptable use agreement
 - Staff acceptable use agreement
- Ensure the school has appropriate safeguarding responses to children who go missing from education
- Ensure the school has appropriate online filters and monitoring systems in place, and that the LCB is reviewing the effectiveness of these filters at least annually
- Ensure the school is considering and implementing appropriate safeguards for the evolving AI technologies
- Ensure the school has appointed a designated member of staff to promote the educational achievement of looked after children, and that this person has appropriate training
- Ensure the school has appointed a designated member of staff to promote the mental health and wellbeing of the children
- Ensure the curriculum covers safeguarding, including topics such as online safety, consent etc
- Keep up to date with statutory guidance relating to safeguarding and child protection (including Keeping Children Safe in Education and Working Together to Safeguard Children) and any advice issued by the relevant safeguarding partners
- Update the LCB on how the monitoring is going and work with the Governance Professional and Chair to ensure that safeguarding is a standing agenda item
- Ensure that all recruitment of staff and volunteers is undertaken in line with safer recruitment processes, including obtaining and checking references
- Ensure that staff are receiving adequate training, and have read the relevant section of Keeping Children Safe in Education and understand their safeguarding responsibilities
- Ensure that an enhanced DBS check is carried out for all members of the LCB, including a Section 128
- Ensure that a suitability check is carried out on the Chair of the LCB
- Ensure that other members of the LCB develop their understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities and complete the NGA safeguarding: a governor's role training (confirmed via Governor Hub)
- Ensure that all LCB members have read Keeping Children Safe in Education and confirmed this via Governor Hub (every September or when guidance updated)
- Attend training for safeguarding link governors

Working with the DSL

- Make sure the school has appointed a designated safeguarding lead (DSL) who is a member of the Senior Leadership Team and that they have an up-to-date job description in place
- Make sure the DSL has sufficient time, resources and training to carry out their role effectively
- Make sure the DSL is receiving adequate support in terms of their wellbeing
- Make certain that any DDSs have an up-to-date job description and are trained to the same standards as the DSL
- Meet regularly with the DSL to monitor the implementation of the school's policy and procedures and consider the outcomes of the school's evaluation of this provision

Monitoring

- The Safeguarding Link Governor must adhere to the following termly quality assurance cycle. This is a non-negotiable minimum requirement of the role:
 - **Termly link visit:** Conduct at least one formal safeguarding link governor visit per term, scheduled in alignment with the Trust's quality assurance calendar (recommended BEST template documents are available via Governor Hub resources area)
 - **SCR:** The Safeguarding Link Governor must ensure there is an up-to-date single central record (SCR) in place and that checks are regularly taking place (to be carried out at least once per term)
 - **Formal reporting:** Following the visit, the governor must complete the Link Governor Visit Report and formally submit it to the Local Committee of the Board (LCB) ahead of the next scheduled meeting.
- Monitor the school's risk assessment procedures to ensure that safeguarding risks are appropriately identified, and all risks to pupils are addressed, e.g., radicalisation, child criminal exploitation (CCE) etc
- Oversee school policy to ensure that the DSL leads Early Help support for pupils
- Review the procedures for monitoring the safety of pupils placed with an alternative provider (AP) and pupils in homestay exchanges, as appropriate
- If applicable, ensure that all pupils undertaking work experience are placed in organisations where there are adequate safeguarding policies and procedures in place
- Monitor the procedures in place for dealing with allegations of abuse and low-level concerns regarding staff, including supply staff, volunteers and contractors - have an awareness of the LADO referrals (**anonymised**) and understand the process followed when concerns regarding staff are raised
- Participate in the annual safeguarding audit
- **Not** deal with specific safeguarding incidents, but will have an awareness of safeguarding incidents (**anonymised**)
- **Not** access contents of staff personnel files – governors can seek assurance of checks/processes by reviewing the recruitment checklist

Communication

- Ensure the school communicates a culture of 'it could happen here' in relation to safeguarding issues
- Ensure that a robust system is implemented to make certain all staff keep accurate records of safeguarding-related concerns and activity
- Ensure all staff are made aware of their responsibility to safeguard pupils
- Ensure the school has clear and effective lines of communication, and works in partnership with, parents and any relevant external agencies
- Ensure that staff understand appropriate information sharing in terms of children/young people and safeguarding – only shared on need-to-know basis and ensure confidentiality of pupils and their families
- Ensure that pupils and parents are regularly surveyed to investigate their perspective on safeguarding at the school.

Appendix 16: LCB Activity Schedule

	Agenda Items ²²	LCB to do list	Report to receive/for information
Autumn Term 1	- Standing Items: H&S, GDPR, Safeguarding & Sustainability - Review skills audits/identify training needs - Review terms of office/succession planning Primary only: PE & Sports Premium Review - Review School Policies due²³ - Agree termly schedule of LCB school visits - Review/discuss the schools finances - Termly update/review of the following:²⁴ Outcomes/predictions; behaviour & SEND	- Confirm declarations on GovHub²⁵ - Complete BEST Safeguarding training - CoG/GP to confirm Governance on GIAS - Update BEST with LCB member changes²⁶ - SEF/SIP review (Principal with LCB support)	- New edition BGHB & Scheme of delegation - SOAP produced for Performance Comm - Principal to share Budget Monitoring & Forecast (Financial Report) - SEND Info Report uploaded to website - Restrictive Intervention Updates
Autumn Term 2	- Standing Items: H&S, GDPR, Safeguarding & Sustainability - Review/discuss school policies due review - Review/discuss the schools finances - Principal to present/discuss findings of progress against Equality objectives - Principal to present/discuss Pupil Premium Strategy (Inc. Review of previous year)²⁷ - Principal to share stakeholder survey results - Review/discuss Link Governor Reports: SEN and Safeguarding (Safeguarding to incl. SCR compliance check)²⁸	- CoG/GP to confirm Governance on GIAS - Update BEST with LCB member changes - SEF/SIP review (Principal with LCB support) - Link Governors to conduct reviews - H&S Report (Principal with LCB Support) - Statement of Provision review/sign (CoG)	- Equality progress review info uploaded to website - Pupil Premium Strategy uploaded to website - Principal to share Financial Report - Receive Link Governor Reports - Stakeholder survey results: Settling in Year Groups – Pupils - Teaching Staff Appraisals & Pay Review - Restrictive Intervention Updates
Spring Term 1	- Standing Items: H&S, GDPR, Safeguarding & Sustainability - Review/discuss school policies due review - Principal to present school finances/reserves - Agree termly schedule of LCB school visits - Termly update/review of the following: Outcomes/predictions; behaviour & SEND	- CoG/GP to confirm Governance on GIAS - Update BEST with LCB member changes - SEF/SIP review (Principal with LCB support) - Statement of Provision review/sign (CoG)	- DPL to supply trust with school GDPR audit - SOAP produced for Performance Comm - BEST CFO provides Principal with their schools' reserve position - Principal to share Financial Report - Half-yearly school website audit completed - Restrictive Intervention Updates

²² This document contains the minimum required in addition to: Declarations of interest, approval of previous minutes and the Principal's usual items covered within their report.

²³ Review School Policies due that half term in line with the school's policy review cycle; see BGHB, appendix 4, for BEST Mandatory school based policies and their review frequency.

²⁴ Items highlighted in gold can be completed either the first or second half of each term.

²⁵ BEST Central will update declarations over the summer in readiness for September of the new academic year.

²⁶ Please complete the Local Committee Member onboarding/off-boarding pro-forma for any new/departed Local Committee Member and share with BEST Central (Yvonne and Lisa)

²⁷ The Pupil Premium review should include spending, impact and the plans for this academic year.

²⁸ Link Governors are to assure themselves the Principal is carrying out sufficient checks – how Local Committee Members are assured is at the LCB's discretion.

Spring Term 2	◦ Standing Items: H&S, GDPR, Safeguarding & Sustainability ◦ Review/discuss school policies due review ◦ Review/discuss the schools finances ◦ Principal to share stakeholder survey results ◦ Review/discuss Link Governor Reports: SEN and Safeguarding (Safeguarding to incl. SCR compliance check)	◦ BGHB Consultation – feedback welcome ◦ CoG/GP to confirm Governance on GIAS ◦ Update BEST with LCB member changes ◦ SEF/SIP review (Principal with LCB support) ◦ Link Governors to conduct reviews ◦ H&S Report (Principal with LCB support)	◦ Principal to share Financial Report ◦ Receive Link Governor Reports ◦ Stakeholder survey results: Wellbeing – Staff ◦ Support Staff Appraisals & Pay Review ◦ Restrictive Intervention Updates
Summer Term 1	◦ Standing Items: H&S, GDPR, Safeguarding & Sustainability ◦ Review/discuss school policies due review ◦ Principal to present school finances/budget ◦ Agree termly schedule of LCB school visits ◦ Termly update/review of the following: Outcomes/predictions; behaviour & SEND	◦ Principal (with LCB support) to produce a balanced budget/5 year forecast for CFO submission ◦ CoG/GP to confirm Governance on GIAS ◦ Update BEST with LCB member changes ◦ SEF/SIP review (Principal with LCB Support) ◦ Statement of Provision review/sign (CoG)	◦ SOAP produced for Performance Comm ◦ Principal to share Financial Report ◦ Centrally commissioned H&S Audit/Report ◦ Restrictive Intervention Updates
Summer Term 2	◦ Standing items: H&S, GDPR, Safeguarding & Sustainability ◦ Review/discuss school policies due review ◦ Review/discuss the school's Finances ◦ Agree next Chair, Vice Chair & Link Governors ◦ Principal to share stakeholder survey results ◦ Annual review on the following: Exclusions; Attendance; Impact on Learning; Behaviour and Staff Attendance ◦ Review/discuss Link Governor Reports: SEN and Safeguarding (Safeguarding to incl. SCR compliance check)	◦ LCB effectiveness review with COO ◦ Complete Skills Audit (provided by BEST) ◦ Publish PE & Sports Premium Review ◦ Link Governors to conduct reviews ◦ H&S Report (Principal with LCB Support) ◦ CoG/GP to confirm Governance on GIAS ◦ Update BEST with LCB member changes ◦ SEF/SIP review (Principal with LCB Support)	◦ Principal to share Financial Report ◦ Receive Link Governor Reports ◦ Half-yearly school website audit completed ◦ Principals to carry out an end of year review of progress against Equality objectives to present to LCB next term and publish ◦ Principal to carry out an end of year PE & Sports Premium review to present to LCB next term and publish to website by 31 July (Mandatory, as per DfE). ◦ Stakeholder survey results: Teaching & Learning – Parents/Carers ◦ Restrictive Intervention Updates

The following documents are available on the BEST website – click [here](#) to view:

- BEST Governance Handbook (BGHB) and Scheme of Delegation
- BEST Strategic Objectives and Action Plan
- Gender Pay Gap Report
- Annual Report on Facilities Time taken by Trade Union Officials
- BEST Annual Accounts
- BEST Legal & Governance Documentation

Document to be used in conjunction with the Quality Assurance Calendar (BGHB, Appendix 5), LCB Terms of Reference (BGHB, page 12) and the Scheme of Delegation (BGHB, Appendix 1)

Equality & Diversity Charter

At Bedfordshire Schools Trust (BEST) we are committed to ensuring equality of education and opportunity for all. We aim to develop a culture of inclusion and diversity in which all those connected to the Trust feel proud of their identity and are able to participate fully in school life.



BEST and its entities aim to meet its obligation under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) by having due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
- Foster good relations across all characteristics – between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

LEADERSHIP	CULTURE	COMMUNICATION
The Trust has a commitment to: • Evaluate how well the setting is achieving the three aims of the general duty across all of the protected characteristics • Identify where there are gaps and prioritise these for action – identifying at least three measurable objectives to focus on over 4 years • Ensure the Equality Policy is implemented and monitored • Observe good equalities practice in staff recruitment, retention and development • Reducing and removing inequalities and barriers that exist • Ensure that equality is embedded within the curriculum	The Trust has a commitment to: • See all learners as of equal value • Recognise and respect differences • Foster positive attitudes and relationships, and a shared sense of cohesion and belongings • Established Equality and Diversity working group • Mutual respect • Challenging incidents of prejudice including racism and homophobia	The Trust has a commitment to: • Consult and involve the BEST community • Promote equality and diversity education amongst the BEST community • Ensure awareness of policies through robust communication processes

Appendix 18: BEST Wellbeing Charter

Care, Guidance and Wellbeing

Our core aims are to:

- Help staff maintain a healthy work/life balance and to feel happy and secure in the support that they receive from their own academy and BEST Trust as a whole
- Monitor work load so that they are manageable, reviewing our calendar and practice often and so rationalising systems to become even more efficient and supportive



LEADERSHIP	CULTURE	COMMUNICATION
The Trust has a commitment to: • Embedding health and wellbeing in to all aspects of the Trust • Funding Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) Trainers, and then in turn, MHFA Champions in each Academy and Nursery • Having a set of health, safety and wellbeing documents that provide employees with the tools to help themselves to improve their health and wellbeing • Consulting with Unions over relevant policies • Supporting staff through periods of illness • Actively encouraging employees to make positive lifestyle choices and signposting a range of interventions and support mechanisms to help prevent ill-health, stay in work or return to work as soon as possible • Robust Safeguarding. We have an array of middle and senior leaders trained as DSLs to respond to the contextual issues that any Academy might face. This group will meet regularly to act a support mechanism to each other • Offering a range of Mindfulness Programmes to all teaching and support staff in the Trust and Governance Team • Offering an Employee Assistance Programme to all staff • Commissioning Wellbeing Coach for 3 days a week	The Trust has a commitment to: • Listening to colleagues and supporting them with empathy and compassion • Building an open and transparent environment that will not tolerate bullying, racism or inequality • Recruiting leaders and Trustees who understand that teachers and support staff are our most valuable resource and who support and challenge positively • Staff feeling valued and included, by creating an effective and meaningful CPD offer • Growing our own talent through our Leadership Ladder • Checking that funds are spent appropriately and add full, positive impact • Promoting Charity and Community involvement and encouraging care beyond our own family of Academies • Employing a Compliance Officer to ensure that the Trust follows correct procedures • Update Safer Recruitment training regularly • Checking that GDPR measures are in place and fit for purpose • Being mindful of pressures external to school that cause anxiety/stress in staff (eg Ofsted) • Developing wellbeing gardens at each of our Academies over the next 2-4 years	The Trust has a commitment to: • Ensuring the means of communication meets the needs of all Trust stakeholders • Having BEST stress and wellbeing guidance available in each setting • Keeping colleagues and stakeholders regularly informed about relevant news and updates across a variety of communication channels • All stakeholders' voices are actively sought when appropriate to do so, so that all feel included and involved • Holding regular, meaningful meetings with Executive Team and Trustees, that are well organised and documented correctly • Ensuring statutory policies are available via the Trust and Academy websites • LCBs regularly monitoring their Academy's wellbeing activities 

Appendix 19: BEST Compassionate Leadership Model

Introduction

BEST offers a radical redefinition of leadership in terms of compassion:

Compassionate Leadership is leadership through service. It understands that we all struggle from time-to-time, asks how we can help and is actioned through a deep commitment to help.

Mission, values and operating principles

Compassionate leadership is evident at BEST in a clear alignment of our mission, values and operating principles:

BEST Mission

To grow the BEST in everyone

BEST Value

We will have the courage to be compassionate
Our community treats all with trust, kindness and honesty

BEST Operating Principle

Lead through service
Leaders and followers will work together with mutual respect and shared responsibility

Philosophy

At the heart of compassionate leadership is the innate worth and deep connectedness of all members of the BEST community. All deserve to feel safe, happy and achieve their full potential.

BEST values everyone as individuals, not just employees. We put people before procedures and aim for human flourishing.

Compassion is central to our leaders' authenticity. It nurtures loyalty to the leader and commitment towards BEST. Mindfulness – an entitlement for all BEST staff – empowers leaders to become aware of, accept and understand their own emotional experience.

Staff learning and wellbeing are prioritised at BEST. These revitalise and sustain our community and members. Mistakes and failure are viewed as inevitable parts of our journey to success.

Practice

To lead with compassion takes courage. It begins with 'what is' and focuses on improvement. Leaders at BEST accept and are kind to themselves and others, leading through a 'we' paradigm.

Acceptance of and kindness to self, within the compassionate BEST model, nurtures openness and confidence and a security for BEST Leaders to share vulnerabilities. The authenticity and example of the leader shines through. Freed, we are nourished throughout our leadership journey.

BEST Leaders walk towards challenges with equanimity. An open heart encourages self-kindness, secure in the knowledge that we are doing our best. An open mind empowers us to be kind to others, knowing they are doing their best. Together, we resolve all challenges.

Pillars of the BEST Compassionate Leadership Model

Three pillars of compassion comprise the BEST Leadership Model: trust, kindness and honesty.

Trust

BEST staff are trusted to perform their roles to the best of their abilities. BEST Leaders provide the autonomy, support and professional development needed to enable everyone to reach their full potential. Wellbeing is at the heart. We believe that happy and successful staff leads to happy and successful learners.

Kindness²⁹

Working with young people is a privilege and joy. BEST Leaders nurture a culture of kindness and gratitude. Everyone is encouraged to practise self-care and to offer care and concern to others. We seek to notice and celebrate the positives of the everyday (lighting the fire), spend time appreciating these (adding wood to the fire) and actively absorbing them (enjoying the warmth of the fire).

Honesty

Honesty is central to creating a BEST community in which all will thrive. BEST Leaders offer praise when it is due and developmental feedback when needed. Clarity is crucial to cementing shared goals, whilst early and often communication is vital to delivery. Curiosity is the unique ingredient, ensuring leaders seek to understand and are open to work collaboratively to address issues.

Impact

Compassion and kindness are contagious, the impact of which spread throughout our community. We see this through:

1. Individual behaviours, the quality of relationships and school/Trust ethos;
2. Case studies;
3. Annual wellbeing surveys;
4. Staff absence data and turnover data;
5. Exit interviews;
6. BEST's reputation as an employer of choice.

²⁹ Kindness is viewed as a 'contour' of compassion. Compassion is taken to focus on our understanding of and commitment to help with people's challenges, whilst kindness centres more on the actions themselves. (see: Kindness in Leadership, Haskins, Thomas and Johri: 2018)

Appendix 20: BEST SEND Guidance

We, at Bedfordshire Schools Trust (BEST), recognise that all staff and governors are responsible for the special educational needs and disabilities provision for all pupils/students in our care. The SEND Code of Practice does not specifically state what governors should be told about SEND, or stipulate any particular forms of reporting to Local Committees of the Board (LCBs). However, the DfE Academy Trust Governance Guide (19 November 2025) pinpoints aspects of practices that would raise standards and manage accountabilities well.

DfE Academy Trust Governance Guide (SEND references)

- Paragraph 2.2 – states the boards’ strategic responsibility for safeguarding and special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) arrangements within the academy trust
- Paragraph 4.3 – states that all boards should have a representative or a sub-committee with specific strategic oversight on behalf of the board for its special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) arrangements
- Paragraph 4.3 – states the importance of the SEND Code of Practice in assisting boards in supporting and promoting discussions with regards to outcomes for learners with SEND as well linking to five tips for holding meetings with SENCos
- Paragraph 6.1 – states the boards’ accountability for effective planning to ensure key duties, such as special educational needs and disabilities and the PSED are met, and ensuring inclusion is undertaken effectively
- Paragraph 7.4 – states the boards’ legal duties in relation to children with special educational needs and disabilities and where these can be found
- Statutory policies for trusts section – state the policies that boards must have in place

Roles and Responsibilities

(Please refer to the Scheme of Delegation which outlines the accountability level for roles)

Trust

- Director of Education and Director of SEND and Safeguarding to provide strategic leadership for educational performance, standards and effectiveness across all BEST settings
- Director of Education and Director of SEND and Safeguarding to develop BEST-wide strategies and procedures for improving outcomes for all pupils/students in all BEST settings
- Director of Education to regularly meet with Principals to monitor actions/performance
- Director of SEND and Safeguarding to regularly meet with SENCOs to monitor actions/performance and carry out annual audit.

Local Committees of the Board

- Appoint a SEND link governor
- Ensure that the SEN Information Report is updated annually and published on the website – in line with the SEN Code of Practice
- Review and interrogate the progress made against the last Key Stage data
- Support and challenge senior leaders to verify that pupil/student needs are identified and met effectively
- Monitor the effectiveness of actions taken and money spent
- Check that the key responsibilities of the SENCo are comprehensively drawn up
- Be assured that the SENCo has sufficient time and resources to carry out their role successfully
- Promote well-being, equality, diversity and tolerance amongst staff and pupils/students
- Discharge duties in respect of pupils/students with SEND

Principal

- Present SEND report to LCB – including sufficient information to allow the LCB to understand fully the pupil performance against National data and the pupil's own potential
- Create a culture of inclusion where well-being, equality, diversity and tolerance are championed
- Ensure that the school meets its statutory obligations to SEND, including setting budgets such that sufficient resources are available to be compliant
- Ensure a whole-school SEND strategy is in place
- Ensure that the SENCo has received statutory / adequate training, and has sufficient time and resources to carry out their role
- Promote well-being, equality, diversity and tolerance amongst staff and pupils/students
- Discharge duties in respect of pupils/students with SEND.

SENCo

- Update the SEN Information Report annually and publish it on the website (in consultation with the LCB)
- Work with Local Authorities to ensure best outcomes for those with EHCPs
- Ensure that the curriculum is accessible to all pupils/students
- Ensure statutory compliance in regards to SEND
- Ensure that a SEND policy is in place, complies with current legislation and is updated on an annual basis (for those schools whose SENCo is not part of the Senior Leadership Team, this would be in conjunction with their SLT link)
- Ensure that the SEND policy is implemented and embedded within the setting (in conjunction with SLT link if applicable)
- Ensure that an accessibility plan is in place and reviewed three yearly, and that the Public Sector Equality Duty Objectives are published and reviewed annually.
- Support the identification of pupils/students with SEND in line with the SEN Code of Practice
- Co-ordinate provision for pupils/students with SEND in line with the SEN Code of Practice
- Liaise with parents/carers of pupils/students with SEND
- Liaise with other providers, outside agencies, educational psychologists and external agencies
- Ensure that the school keeps the records of all pupils/students with SEND up to date in line with the SEN Code of Practice
- Work with the Principal to develop a whole-school SEND strategy and development plan
- Co-ordinate staff training as appropriate.

Whilst there is no stipulated format (or frequency of times), to follow where reports to Governors are concerned, a recommended template to report to governors on SEND pupils/students is available on Governor Hub on the resources page. This template may be adapted to suit the individual needs of each setting. This template may also be used as part of the SEND link governor visit.

Appendix 21: BEST – Ofsted Protocols for Principals and Nursery Managers

- Take the initial call, establishing if the visit is a Section 5 or Section 8 category
- After the initial call please contact Director of Education or a member of the BEST Central team at the earliest possible convenience to alert them to the visit
- BEST Central team will alert Director of Education, if you have not done so, as, it would be expected that DofE would be present for the afternoon telephone call definitely, and the morning call too if possible
- IT support will be allocated to the school for the full 2 days if someone is not already based on your site. The COO will arrange this on the afternoon of the phone call
- It is expected that the DofE will be present on the site for the whole 2 (1) days, and as many of her team as possible
- In the afternoon follow up call, please establish which areas will be focused on, which policies and documents will be needed, and which staff need to be interviewed; the new framework effective from Sept 2025 will not have deep dives as such
- Please secure an interview with Trust representatives and a slot for Trustees and LCB. The DofE can be in any interviews with you should you wish as a nominee person
- As soon as this rota of activities is established, please alert the Director of Education, so that we can support by allocating the SI Team where necessary
- Be prepared to talk of a group of SEND/Vulnerable children around whom the Ofsted might focus
- It is expected that the DofE will be at the final de-briefing, alongside your Chair of Governors (and other Governors who wish to attend), plus Trustees
- In the case of any concerns during the inspection the DofE must be contacted immediately

The Seven Principles of Public Life

(Originally published by the Nolan Committee: The Committee on Standards in Public Life was established by the then Prime Minister in October 1994, under the Chairmanship of the Lord Nolan, to consider standards of conduct in various areas of public life, and to make recommendations).

All members of the LCB should sign the 'Seven Principles of Public Life' declaration.

A copy of this should be stored on GovHub.

Selflessness - Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

Integrity – Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

Objectivity – Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

Accountability – Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

Openness – Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

Honesty – Holders of public office should be truthful. *(Note: The wording about declaring interests was moved up into 'Integrity').*

Leadership – Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour and treat others with respect. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

I have received a copy of BEST's Governance, Scheme of Delegation and Operational Structure'. I accept the conditions of being a Local Committee Member therein described and will do my very best to promote BEST and its academies at all times.

All trustees and local committee members are required to confirm their agreement to this statement by completing the confirmation on Governor hub at the start of each academic year.

Appendix 23: BEST Governance Support Offer

1. Introduction

Governance is a demanding and ever more complex activity – recruiting, developing and retaining the right people to be local committee members is essential if we want governance to be effective.

The development of high quality governance across BEST (Bedfordshire Schools Trust) was recognised with the award of the nationally renowned Governor Mark Award – and we are incredibly proud that BEST is the first MAT to have achieved this award. Whilst this demonstrates that there is strong and effective governance in place within BEST it is critical to ensure this is maintained and developed – central to this is ensuring high quality support is available to all those who undertake governance roles within BEST.

In this document we are pleased to be able to set out the BEST Core Offer of support available to all those in a governance role within BEST. This extends to Local Committees of the Board (LCB) Committee Members, BEST Trustees (sometimes called Directors) and BEST Members. For further information and an in-depth overview of how governance works within BEST please refer to the annually updated BEST Governance Handbook: (Insert hyperlink) <https://www.bestacademies.org.uk/site/data/files/governance/legal/55AF0CC023E073949FC07DC7CD8FE367.pdf>

It should also be recognised that BEST, with 10 academies and approximately 80 Local Committee Members, has to ensure that the support offered is appropriate to enable committee members to function effectively but it is also proportionate in terms of resource devoted to that support. All support must ensure best value and comparable to the levels of support invested in staff members.

The key driver for governance support is to enable committee members to fulfil the three core functions of governance (as defined in the DfE Governance Handbook, Ofsted Framework and Academies Financial Handbook) namely:

1. Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
2. Holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils, and the performance management of staff;
3. Overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent.

2. BEST Core Offer

The BEST Support Services team provides the following support to all committee members, free at point of delivery, throughout the year and upon request. The support will be responsive and community led and as such may vary from year to year - dependent on the existing skill set of committee members and emerging demands from within and beyond the Trust.

Governance Handbook – the Handbook is a key resource to provide support including model terms of reference, clarification of roles and responsibilities, a clear Scheme of Delegation, policy schedule, model terms of reference, a Quality Assurance Calendar, a Code of Conduct and Website Compliance checklist

Governance Advice Line (p50 of BGHB) – access to ongoing support from Dr Alan Lee, CEO and National Leader of Education (NLE) for Members and Trustees or Mark Liddiard, COO for LCB members

Contact details: seek further support where necessary from the BEST's Governance Advice line accessed via:

- CEO, Dr Alan Lee, alee@bestacademies.org.uk or 07984 404578 (for Members and Trustees) or
- COO, Mark Liddiard, mliddiard@bestacademies.org.uk or 07984 003466 (for LCB members).

Support for Chairs – bespoke tailored support for all Chairs within BEST, be that a new first time Chair or experienced Chairs managing specific issues.

Bi-Annual Governance Conference – a key, high profile event to share importance governance issues, celebrate successes and listen to local committee members. Now established in the ongoing BEST cycle with high quality inputs and impressive attendance levels.

Annual Skills Audit – sharing of a Skills Audit to enable an annual audit of skills level and recognised need within each LCB or Trust Board. This supports reflective practice and an honest consideration of future support needs for the governing body group.

Governance Recruitment – any LCB seeking to recruit new members can request support; this support will be bespoke and may come in many forms such as advice, marketing materials, advocating on behalf of the LCB, help with shortlisting and interviewing etc.

Bespoke training – the Annual Skills Audit feeds into a bespoke programme of governance training – noticing the key issues emerging for the audits and relating them to the three core functions of governance. These courses will be provided by BEST, will be academy/BEST specific and tailored to meet the identified need in BEST. Appropriately trained experts will deliver them.

Induction Programme – BEST offers a detailed Induction programme for new and existing local committee members. The programme is designed to support committee members to find out more about BEST and how the collective functions of governance work together across the Trust. New LCB members also receive support and induction at LCB level (the support varies from LCB to LCB)

Support to address statutory duties – local committee members need for awareness of statutory responsibilities such as Public Sector Equality Duty/Equality and Diversity, Safeguarding, SEND, Health and Safety, GDPR, etc. Support is provided in a variety of ways including Central Services support and online packages

Chairs' Forum – this group has been established to support Chairs in their key role and share best practice across all aspects of governance within BEST. The group will support efficiency activity e.g. sharing key materials, supporting each other etc.

GovernorHub – A secure, centralised online portal designed to streamline board management by bringing together meeting papers, compliance tracking, and communication in one place.

Governance Professional support – each LCB recruits its own Governance Professional but support is offered from BEST where appropriate and upon request

Ofsted inspection support – the approach to Ofsted Inspections is to ensure governance is considered in a Trust perspective i.e. how the LCB (as a sub group of the Trust Board) and Trust work together to ensure effective governance is in place. This includes CEO, COO and Director of Education attendance at the appropriate meeting during the inspection process

External Support – via professional contacts or membership, BEST has access to external advice and expertise such as Forum Strategy/Michael Pain, Confederation of Schools Trusts (CST)/Leora Cruddas, NGA/Emma Knights.

3. Additional Sources of Support

Whilst the BEST Core Offer should meet high-level need it may well be that additional support is identified and required at an individual board level (Members, Trust Board, individual academy LCB). Once identified the individual board should consider how best this need might be met – that could include a discussion with the BEST Central Services team (including the School Improvement elements) or could be from another governance board within BEST – increasingly LCB to LCB support is expected to become a preferred model of support given the developing expertise within BEST, perhaps facilitated and encouraged by the Chairs' Forum. However, there should also be a consideration of the additional support that committee members can access from outside of BEST. Below is a list of the more prominent sources of support but is not an exhaustive list:

The Key for Governors <https://schoolgovernors.thekeysupport.com/> An off shoot for The Key for School Leaders, comprehensive website for support, offering on-demand training modules, practical templates, and real-time guidance updates linked to the latest statutory requirements—as well as a Secure AI tool built specifically to help members safely query approved governance material.

Various Websites Including

<https://www.moderngovernor.com> – interactive online e-learning modules, subscription based

<https://www.governorsforschools.org.uk> – recruiting Local Committee Members

<https://www.independentgovernor.com/> - ex NLGs offering free, independent support

<https://www.inspiringgovernance.org/> – DfE funded governance recruitment website and support organisation

Appendix 24: Bedfordshire Schools Trust: Ofsted Inspections – Schools

Next Inspection Due (approximate)	Academy Name	Opening date as an academy	Date joined BEMAT/BEST	Date of Previous Inspection	Previous Inspection Judgement	Most Recent Inspection Date	Most Recent Inspection Grade
By March '27 ³⁰	Gothic Mede	1 Nov 2013	1 Nov 2013	27-28 June 2017	Good	21-22 March 2023 (ungraded)	Good
By March '27	Lawnside	1 Jan 2019	1 Jan 2019	28-29 June 2017	RI	28-29 March 2023 (Section 5)	Good
By March '27	Samuel Whitbread	1 March 2012	1 March 2012	31 Oct – 1 Nov 2017	Good	2-3 March 2023 (ungraded)	Good
By Sept '27 ³¹ - Sept '29	Castle Newnham ATS	1 Sept 2024	1 Sept 2024	12 Nov 2020 (Remote monitoring - Covid)	Outstanding	17-18 March 2026 (Section 5)	Expected standard (in all areas)
By Nov '27	Campton	1 Nov 2020	1 Nov 2020	Academy converter	n/a	21-22 Nov 2023 (Section 5)	Good
By Jan '28	Pix Brook Academy	1 Sept 2019	1 Sept 2019	New Free School	n/a	24–25 Jan 2024 (Section 5)	Good
By March '28	Gravenhurst	1 Sept 2013	1 Sept 2013	7-8 Mar 2011	Outstanding	5-6 March 2024 (Section 5)	Outstanding
By April '28	Langford Village	1 June 2014	1 June 2014	22-23 Nov 2022 (ungraded)	Good	24-25 April 2024 (Section 5)	Good
By Feb 2029	Robert Bloomfield	1 May 2011	1 May 2011	25-26 June 2014	Outstanding	11-12 Feb 2025 (Section 5)	Outstanding (in all areas)
By Feb 2029	St Christophers	1 April 2012	1 Sept 2017	26-27 Sept 2019 (Section 8)	Good	4-5 February 2025 (Section 5)	Good (in all areas)
By April '29	Etonbury	1 Nov 2011	1 Nov 2011	11-12 Feb 2020	Good	23-24 April 2025 (ungraded)	Good

³⁰ Schools are inspected approximately once every 4 years, except if they are in one of the monitoring programmes (Ofsted, Inspection information for state-funded schools: for use from November 2025, updated 5 November 2025)

³¹ If a school receives a new URN due to a change in its status **or after undergoing a significant change**, it becomes a new school for inspection purposes. However, if the school retains its URN following a change, Ofsted treat it as the same school. Routine inspection of a new school is usually in its third year of operation (Ofsted 'Inspection information for state-funded schools: for use from November 2025), however, this can be within years 1-3 of operation.

Bedfordshire Schools Trust: Ofsted Inspections – BEST Nurseries

Next Inspection Due (approximate)	Academy Name	Opening date	Date of Previous Inspection	Previous Inspection Judgement	Most Recent Inspection Date	Most Recent Inspection Grade
By Dec '26 ³²	BEST Nursery – Shefford		16 Feb 2022	Requires Improvement	12 December 2022	Good
By Feb '28	BEST Nursery – Langford	April 2021	8 March '23	Requires Improvement	27 Feb 2024	Good
By May '28	BEST Nursery – Arlesey		27 June 2018	Good	21 May 2024	Good

³² As of April 2026, Ofsted will move to a 4-year inspection window - Ofsted 'Early years inspections: frequently asked questions, published 23 January 2026