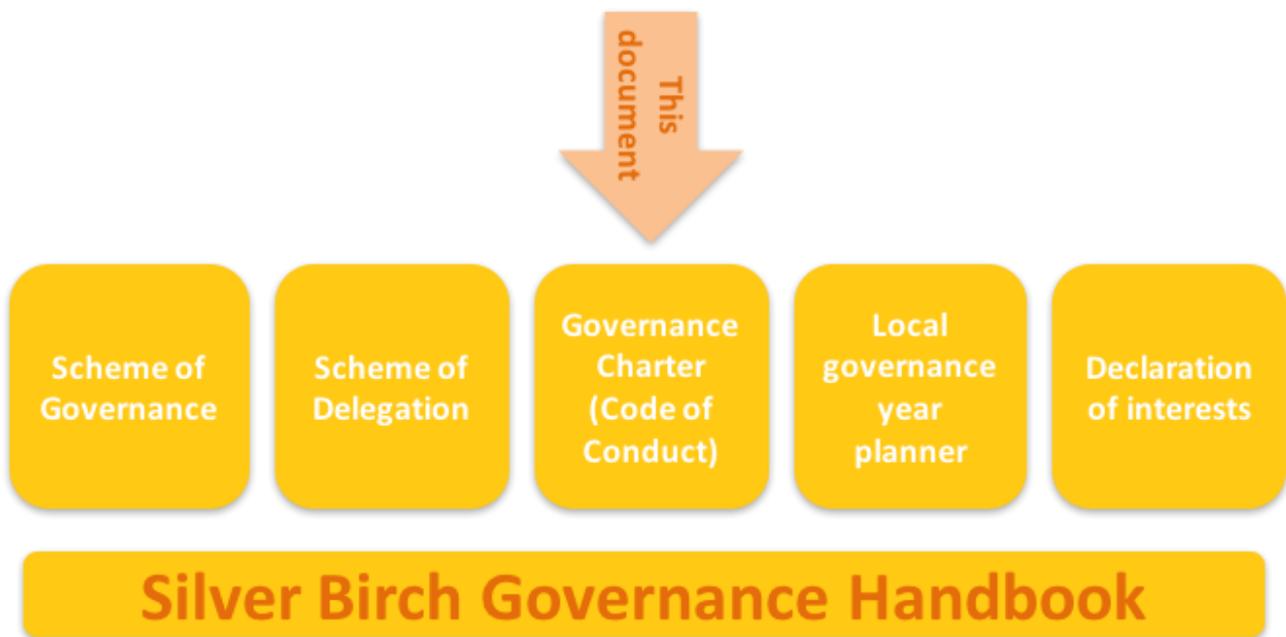


SILVER BIRCH ACADEMY TRUST

GOVERNANCE CHARTER

June 2017



Introduction

- 1.1. Silver Birch Academy (SBA) is a Multi-Academy Trust established in 2012. It consists of a group of state primary schools. Our ambition is to provide the highest quality education for all its pupils, where excellence is the norm, poor outcomes are not accepted, and where setting high aspirations for educational achievement is the right of every child.
- 1.2. The Trust currently has schools in Waltham Forest and Redbridge. Existing schools that share the Trust's philosophy will also join the Trust over the next few years.

- 1.3. Details of the regulatory and statutory frameworks in which SBA operates are all provided in the “Overarching Governance Arrangements” document, part of the Silver Birch governance documents pack.
- 1.4. All Trustees and Governors of Local Advisory Committees (LACs) have a collective responsibility to champion and support the educational vision and philosophy of the Trust. This is demonstrated through their own commitment and engagement. Each Trustee and LAC Governor brings their own experience and knowledge to the workings of the Trust and the schools for which they have responsibility.
- 1.5. As part of their commitment to SBA’s Vision, Trustees and LAC Governors have agreed to follow a Governance Charter, set out below. The Executive team is also expected to follow the Charter.

Governance Charter

Roles & Responsibilities

- a. We understand the purpose of the Board and Local Advisory Committees (LAC) and the role of the Executive Team and Headteachers of schools.
- b. (Trustees) We understand that the Board is legally responsible for the Trust, and is accountable to the Department of Education and ultimately to Parliament for how public money is spent.
- c. We accept that we have no legal authority to act individually, except when the Board has given us delegated authority to do so, and therefore we will only speak on behalf of the Board and the Trust when we have been specifically authorised to do so.
- d. We accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the Board or the LACs (where they have delegated decision-making responsibilities). This means that we will not speak against majority decisions outside the Board or LAC meetings, unless we consider that there is a risk to safeguarding or financial probity.
- e. We will act fairly and without prejudice.
- f. (Trustees) We will do all that is expected of a good employer.
- g. We will encourage open governance and will act appropriately.
- h. We will consider carefully how our decisions may affect the community and other schools.
- i. We will always be mindful of our responsibility to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of our Trust and its schools.
- j. In making or responding to criticism or complaints we will follow the procedures established by Trust.
- k. We will actively support and challenge the Executive Team and Headteachers of each school.
- l. We are aware of and agree to abide by the Seven Principles of Public Life (listed in Appendix A)

Commitment

- a. We acknowledge that accepting office as a Trustee or LAC Governor involves the commitment of significant amounts of time and energy at certain times of the year.
- b. We will each involve ourselves actively in the work of the Trust Board or LAC as appropriate, and accept our fair share of responsibilities, including serving on committees or working groups.
- c. We will respond to communication on SBA matters, or accept that a silence of two consecutive days will be deemed consent unless a holding response is sent.
- d. We will make full efforts to attend all meetings, and where we cannot attend, explain in advance why we are unable to do so.
- e. We will prepare for and make an active contribution at meetings of the Trust and LAC as appropriate. This includes reading papers in advance, and responding to requests for feedback. After one reminder, silence after a deadline will be considered assent.
- f. We will get to know the schools well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in school activities.
- g. We will visit the schools, with all visits arranged in advance with the Executive Team and Headteacher as appropriate. All visits will be undertaken within the framework established by the Trust. (Trustees will visit at least one school a year, and LAC governors will visit their school at least three times a year). Visits will be written up within one week.
- h. We will consider seriously our individual and collective needs for induction, training and development, and will undertake relevant training in order to play as full a part as possible in the governance of the Trust.
- i. We accept that in the interests of open governance and to be compliant with the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) guidance, our full names, date of appointment, terms of office, roles, attendance records, relevant business and pecuniary interests, category of Trustee/ LAC Governor and the body responsible for appointing us will be published on the Trust's website. We also accept that all required information relating to Trustees/LAC Governors will be collected and logged on the DfE's national database of governors (Edubase).

Relationships

- a. We will work as a team and build constructive and professional working relationships, within and beyond the Trust
- b. We will express views openly, courteously and respectfully in all our communications with other Trustees, LAC Governors and anyone else who works for the Trust.
- c. We will support the Chairs of the Trust Board and each LAC in their role of ensuring appropriate conduct both at meetings and at all times.
- d. We will be prepared to answer queries from other Trustees and LAC Governors in relation to delegated functions and take into account any concerns expressed, and we will express appreciation for the time, effort and skills that have been committed to the delegated function by those involved.
- e. We will develop effective working relationships with members of the Executive Team, Headteachers of schools, staff and parents, and other relevant agencies and the community where appropriate.

- f. We are working together for a common cause, we will act as one cohesive unit. We will include everyone by invitation. All meetings will be recorded and reported.

Confidentiality

- a. Unless we think there is a risk to safeguarding or to financial propriety, we will observe complete confidentiality when matters are deemed confidential or where they concern specific members of staff, pupils or parents, either inside or outside school.
- b. We will exercise the greatest prudence at all times when discussions regarding Trust/School business arise outside Trust/LAC meetings.

Conflicts of interest

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

Breach of this code of conduct

- a. If we believe this code has been breached, we will raise this issue with the Chair of the Trust and Chief Executive Officer, who will investigate. The Trust will only use suspension or removal as a last resort, after seeking to resolve any difficulties or disputes in more constructive ways.
- b. Should it be the Chair of Trustees whom we believe has breached this code, another Trustee, such as the Vice-Chair, will investigate.

Signed:

Name (Print):

Role (Trustee, LAC Governor):

Date:

APPENDIX A

The Seven Principles of Public Life

These principles were originally published by the Nolan Committee: The Committee on Standards in Public Life, October 1994, under the Chairmanship of Lord Nolan.

1. Selflessness - Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends.
2. Integrity - Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their official duties.
3. Objectivity - In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.
4. Accountability - Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.
5. Openness - Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.
6. Honesty - Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.
7. Leadership - Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.