



Terms of Reference for Local Academy Boards (LABs) City Academy Whitehawk, Glenleigh Park, Heron Park, King Offa, Oakwood, Westvale Park

Effective 1 September 2024

Mission

Aurora Academies Trust (Aurora) exists to provide opportunity and create success for all our pupils.

Vision

- Aurora is dedicated to providing the best possible standard of education to pupils in our nursery, primary and secondary schools across the south-east of England.
- As a trust, we are committed to doing everything we can to support our schools and pupils to achieve personal excellence.
- We want pupils to leave our schools achieving their potential and enjoying learning with the ambition, resilience, curiosity and self-belief for success in life.
- Our ambition is for all our schools to be excellent and inclusive schools serving their local communities with achievement levels above similar schools nationally.
- Over the next five years Aurora plans to grow because we want to support more schools and pupils.

How we work together as a group of schools

Collaboration lies at the heart of the work of Aurora. Each Aurora school has its own unique identity and place in its local community. However, we have developed common approaches in key areas that contribute to our collective improvement.

The Aurora Approach

We asked our school leaders, staff and local academy boards what sort of trust we are and what it was like to work at Aurora, and this is what they said:

- We are ambitious as a trust - we all share an aim to get better at what we do – this is shared by all staff working across the trust and driven from the top by trustees.
- We have a strong track record of impact –all our schools are good or outstanding schools. We have developed and agreed key elements of our school improvement approach that have worked in supporting our schools to improve.
- We focus on the children and communities we serve – we are a civic institution that make a strong contribution to all the communities we serve from towns and cities to rural areas and coastal communities. We strive to provide fantastic pastoral care and extra-curricular opportunities to help pupils achieve excellence in all that they do.
- We believe in deep and purposeful collaboration – we work together and learn from each other to make things better for our pupils, communities, and staff. We learn from other schools and trusts and our schools are all part of local partnerships.
- We support and challenge each other to improve – we share a collective responsibility for the outcomes for all our schools and pupils; what goes with that is a genuine willingness to offer help and support whenever it is needed.
- We have developed shared and effective practice in key areas like the curriculum - this common practice is reinforced through shared professional learning and development. At the same time, we recognise and respect the unique characteristics of our schools and they have lots of freedom to decide what works best for them.

- We are strongly committed to supporting and developing all of our staff – including growing our own teaching assistants, teachers and leaders and there are lots of professional development opportunities for staff at all levels.
- We are part of a global partnership which gives opportunities to staff and students - our sponsor, Pansophic Learning, runs schools internationally in the US, Dubai, Switzerland and Africa. This provides opportunities for professional and cultural development for our staff and students.

1. Purpose of the LAB:

The LAB is a sub-committee of the Aurora Academies Trust board of trustees with delegated responsibility for the continual improvement of the School's educational outcomes. It forms an important part of the governance arrangements of Aurora.

The LAB should uphold the mission and vision of Aurora and support the Aurora Approach as set out above. The LAB's focus should be on monitoring the standard of education and achievement at their local school and engaging with the communities their school serves, as well as taking advantage of opportunities for collaboration with other LABs and the trust board. This includes supporting and challenging school leaders and each other to improve in their respective roles.

For the purposes of Ofsted, the LAB is the body that provides local governance of the School. Ofsted expects that

“those responsible for governance understand their role and carry this out effectively. They ensure that the [School] has a clear vision and strategy and that resources are managed well. They hold leaders to account for the quality of education”.

The [Academy Trust Governance Guide](#) explains that, in trusts, the purpose of governance is to provide:

- strategic leadership
- accountability and assurance
- strategic engagement.

The trust board has collective accountability and strategic responsibility for the trust. It has a focus on ensuring the trust delivers an excellent education to pupils while maintaining effective financial management and must ensure compliance with:

- the trust's charitable objects
- regulatory, contractual and statutory requirements
- their funding agreement

The LAB has an important role in exercising these functions at school level on behalf of the trustees; however, it has no responsibility in connection with financial management, although it has a role in monitoring the effectiveness of the pupil premium spend (see paragraph 8 below).

2. Members of the LAB

- The Chair (appointed by trustees)
- Headteacher (ex-officio)*

- Two parent members (elected by parents)
- One staff member (elected by staff)
- Between two and five co-opted members (appointed by the LAB)

Other members of staff may be invited to attend LAB meetings but they shall not have a vote or count in the quorum.

* If a school has a head of school and an executive headteacher, the head of school fulfils the responsibilities of the headteacher in relation to LAB membership and working with the LAB. The executive headteacher would also be expected to attend LAB meetings but shall not have a vote or count towards the quorum.

3. LAB procedure

- The LAB shall meet at least five times per year. A LAB may decide to hold additional meetings.
- Meetings are quorate when four members are present.
- LAB Sub-Committees and Working Parties may be formed but written terms of reference must be put in place.
- The LAB shall appoint one member to lead on Safeguarding, one to lead on Pupil Premium and another to lead on Special Educational Needs.
- The LAB shall appoint a Vice Chair.
- The trust board shall appoint a professional clerk to the LAB who shall prepare agendas and minutes and ensure LAB records are kept up to date.
- Minutes of each LAB meeting shall be made available for inspection at the School or online.
- The agenda and papers for LAB meetings must be sent to all LAB members at least 7 days in advance of the meeting. Additional papers may be circulated within 7 days of the meeting with the approval of the Chair.

4. Appointment of LAB members

- The appointment of a LAB member is subject to suitability checks being carried out in accordance with Aurora's safer recruitment policy.
- The CEO or Chair of Trustees, with input from the Governance Manager where required, shall recommend a Chair of the LAB following an interview process. The trust board shall appoint the Chair of the LAB and may also remove the Chair of the LAB at any time. If the appointed chair is an existing LAB member (either co-opted or parent), the vacancy arising in that category should be filled.
- The parent members shall be elected following an open and transparent election process as outlined in the LAB member recruitment and induction procedure. Where the number of parents standing for election is less than the number of vacancies, the LAB shall appoint parent LAB members. An appointed parent member shall be a parent or grandparent at the School or, where this is not reasonably practical, a parent with one of more children within the age range of the School.
- References to a parent shall include those exercising parental responsibility.
- Parents who are members of staff at the school are not eligible to stand for election as parent LAB members. However, under certain circumstances – see below – they may be appointed to the role.

- The staff LAB member shall be elected following an open and transparent election process where all members of staff at the school shall have a vote.
- A member of staff at the school may serve as co-opted LAB member or appointed parent LAB member if they have children at the school provided the number of staff members on the board does not exceed one third of total membership.
- When the term of office of a parent or staff LAB member expires, the current LAB member cannot be re-appointed, but an open and transparent election process must be held. The expiring LAB member may nominate themselves for re-election.
- The LAB shall appoint a minimum of two and a maximum of five co-opted members to represent the local community and/or with a particular focus on bringing specific skills to the board.
- All LAB members (except for the Headteacher who serves ex officio) will serve a term of office of four years. These members may then stand for re-election or re-appointment.

5. Removal of LAB members

The LAB may remove a LAB member (other than the Chair) for one or more of the following reasons:

- The LAB member being absent without the LAB's permission from all meetings within a six months' period or
- The member's ineffectiveness, following a formal review of performance by the LAB chair or
- A significant breach of the LAB's code of conduct.

This decision should be clearly recorded in the LAB meeting minutes and communicated to the Governance Manager.

The trust board reserves the right to remove any LAB member.

6. Roles and responsibilities of the LAB

The remit of the LAB is specific to Aurora and is different to the remit of the governing body of a maintained school. For example, budget setting and monitoring, health and safety, policies and admissions are the responsibility of Aurora and the School. The LAB's role is

- To monitor the educational performance of the School and thereby hold senior leaders to account
- To monitor termly behaviour and attendance data
- To agree the School Improvement Plan (SIP) and to monitor its implementation
- To approve the annual special educational needs information report prepared by the School
- To ensure that self-evaluation processes are robust and accurate
- To ensure that additional funds, including Pupil Premium and Sports Grants, are used for the purposes intended and that they have impact on educational outcomes
- To ensure that safeguarding policies and procedures are being followed by the School
- To agree and annually monitor progress made against the School's equalities objectives
- To monitor the implementation of key policies at local level

- Accessibility Plan
 - Anti Bullying
 - Attendance
 - Behaviour
 - Online Safety
 - Relationships Education
 - Safeguarding
 - SEND
- To be notified of and, where required, consider the Headteacher's decision to suspend or exclude a pupil (further details in paragraph 9 below)
 - To consider complaints referred to the LAB in accordance with the School's complaints policy (further details in paragraph 11 below).
 - To systematically engage with stakeholders (staff, parents, pupils) and feed their views back to the trust board

7. Specific duties of the LAB Chair

- To contribute to the annual performance management of the Headteacher
- To contribute to the LAB Chair's Forum and provide a report on these to the LAB
- To participate in CEO Quality Assurance Meetings with the Headteacher and provide a report of these to the LAB
- To support the Governance Manager in ensuring LAB members comply with Aurora's requirements around declarations of interest, confirmations and training

These duties may be delegated to the Vice Chair as necessary.

8. Provision of financial information

Responsibility for setting and monitoring the School's budget rests with the Headteacher , overseen by Aurora's Director of Finance and the Finance, Audit HR and Risk Committee. The LAB shall be provided with high level financial information to enable it to assess whether funds (particularly specific grants such as the Pupil Premium Grant) that are being spent are leading to educational impact.

This information will include:

- Annual budgeted income
- Annual budgeted expenditure
- Budgeted surplus
- Annual pupil premium grant
- Planned capital spend
- Staffing costs as % of income

9. Exclusions

The LAB has delegated authority to act on behalf of the trust board as the “governing board” of the School for the purposes of the statutory guidance on school exclusions. This means that the LAB must be informed of suspensions and exclusions by the Headteacher and may be required to consider the decision taken by the Headteacher to exclude a pupil. The LAB must act in accordance with the statutory guidance when considering exclusions and will be given the necessary support and advice by Aurora. The LAB may delegate review of exclusions to a panel of three LAB members and, if not enough LAB members are available, enlist the support of LAB members of other Aurora schools.

10. Staff disciplinary

In exceptional cases only, members of the LAB may be asked to sit on a staff disciplinary appeal panel. Any such panel would be convened in accordance with the Aurora Employment Manual.

11. Complaints

The LAB may be required to consider a complaint made against the School in accordance with the School’s published Complaints Policy. The LAB must ensure that advice is sought from Aurora regarding the process for hearing a complaint and that the procedures regarding the constitution of an appeal panel as set out in the School’s Complaint’s Policy are followed.

12. Community support

The LAB should assist the School in developing links with the local community including local residents, businesses and elected representatives such as MPs and Councillors. LAB members should be ambassadors and advocates of the School. LAB members who have been co-opted to represent the local community play a particularly important role in this.

13. Induction and Training

The LAB Chair will provide an induction for all new LAB members, supported by the clerk (as agreed) and the Trust Governance Manager. Ongoing training for LAB members is provided by Aurora either in-house or via external providers, and, in addition to compulsory training on appointment and training agreed with the chair, LAB members are encouraged to proactively seek out training relevant to their role. LAB members who are interested in becoming Chair are encouraged to undertake training by the NGA or another recognised organisation.

14. Expenses

LAB members are volunteers, but reasonable expenses can be reimbursed and LAB members are encouraged to claim. Please see Aurora’s Expenses Policy for further information.

15. Documents for Reference

- Scheme of Delegation
- Aurora Governance Handbook



- LAB member role description
- LAB chair role description
- Aurora Code of Conduct
- Aurora New LAB member Recruitment and Induction Policy
- Academy Trust Governance Guide