



The Auriga Academy Trust

Clarendon School Governor's Code

A: A Shared Vision and a Long-Term Strategic Plan

The Auriga Academy Trust was formed by Clarendon and Strathmore Schools in October 2016. More recently Clarendon together with the Trust have worked to open an additional special free school, Capella House School, for pupils with Speech Language and Communication Needs. The trust and its constituent schools continue to consider other partnerships where shared values and specialist expertise might benefit our pupils and the wider local SEND community

. The vision of the Trust is to work together to enhance provision for all our pupils by:

- building on our expertise and experience to become a recognised national leader in special needs education;
- giving staff the opportunity to gain and share knowledge, to encourage and inspire each other and others in our wider community;
- addressing the future demand for specialist provision now;
- being in a better position to commission therapy services and engage extra support to ensure that it is as targeted and as responsive as possible; and
- creating economies of scale by sharing core administrative functions and by negotiating bought in services for our schools which will enable greater investment where it matters, in the classroom

Clarendon School is a special school catering for pupils aged 4-16 with complex learning difficulties. The school also manages the Gateway Centre (attached to Twickenham Academy) for secondary pupils with a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder. An outreach programme enables us to share our expertise with colleagues in mainstream schools, helping them to support other young people with learning difficulties more effectively.

Our Clarendon Vision:

To be a centre of excellence where all pupils are supported and challenged to:

- Achieve their full potential in their academic, social, creative, personal, physical and moral development.
- Grow in confidence and become as independent as possible.
- Make a positive contribution to the school and the wider community, in which they are valued as individuals.

Our mission statement:

Our philosophy is that pupils will flourish and achieve their full potential when they are taught:

- In a nurturing, safe and engaging environment.
- With consistently excellent, engaging and progressive teaching and learning opportunities for all
- A broad and innovative curriculum which enriches the experience of our pupils.
- And provided with opportunities for life-long learning, growing independence and to be valued members of society.

For Clarendon to improve further and to meet these aims they have been developed by the whole school community and need to be owned by pupils, parents, staff, headteacher and governors alike. It is the job of the Local Governing Body (LGB) working with the headteacher and senior leaders and informed by the wider Trust priorities to agree strategies for local implementation looking forward several years and taking into account outside developments and initiatives impacting on the school. This is facilitated by an annual strategy meeting attended by the full LGB and the headship team with input sought from staff, parents and pupils through a programme of surveys.

This strategic discussion informs the annual school development plan (SDP), the educational detail of which will be formulated by the senior leaders of the school and agreed by the LGB and the Trust Board. The SDP is implemented by the senior leadership team and staff and then its progress and impact on pupil attainment, pupil progress and school improvement is evaluated and monitored by governors, through meetings of the full LGB & its specialist committees and via a governor visiting and reporting system. There is further oversight by the Board of Trustees and its committees.

It is the responsibility of the headteacher to undertake the day-to-day management of the school, to implement the policies agreed with the governing body and to ensure delivery of the curriculum. The role of the LGB is that of a 'critical friend', providing support and constructive challenge in equal measure. To fulfil this function effectively all governors need to know Clarendon really well, build positive, informed relationships with all stakeholders and become actively involved in the life of the school.

Where we are now:

- Healthy School Bronze Award 2014
- Sportsmark
- Activemark
- Gateway – National Autistic Society Accreditation with commendation
- Clarendon Cycle Scheme winners of Richmond Den 2013
- Auriga Academy Trust academy order granted July 2016
- Academy Conversion October 2016
- Maaz Free School proposal receives approval to enter pre-opening phase April 2017
- Artsmark Gold re-awarded Summer 2017
- 2018 Moved onto new and separate Clarendon Primary and Secondary Sites
- Ofsted June 2019 – Outstanding
- September 2019 Capella House School opened with independent LGB

Current Priorities

Above all and throughout everything we do there is the need to prioritise improved outcomes for all our pupils and the wider school community both now and in the future. This requires ongoing strategic planning and effective implementation of planned improvements at all levels.

Trust

The Covid Pandemic had a significant impact on the plans and operations of the Trust and all its schools over the previous year with a principle focus on supporting staff and pupils and ensuring as far as possible a continuing provision of education safely to all our pupils. Nonetheless over the last year a wider centralisation of the administrative functions of the Trust was implemented and a review undertaken of the

governance structures following the growth and maturing of the trust over recent years. This resulted in a collaborative review of the Schem of Delegation which governs the structures, accountability and reporting responsibilities across the different levels of governance. This will be implemented in September 2021 and will need to be embedded and reviewed over the course of the year. Other key areas for continued development are:

- Supporting all schools to Ofsted Outstanding at next review
- Making the most of the trust family to support and learn from one another and become a centre of excellence
- Building upon the existing ethos of staff development to attract, support and train a skilled workforce
- Working with AfC to identify and meet the growing demand for specialist provision and oversubscription in Trust schools
- Building on our outreach support for local schools and also considering a strategy for the growth and partnerships that might benefit the trust Having brought OT provision in house consider options for wider therapy oversight
- Ensure the successful opening of Capella Primary scheduled for September 2021 to include an early years assessment centre serving the borough ensuring identification of educational needs and prospective pathways for pupils at the earliest possible stage on the same site as the Capella primary provision

Clarendon, including Gateway

The corona virus pandemic had a significant impact on the school community and school operations for a further year and for many of us new ways of working continued and developed. The virus continues to have an impact and cause uncertainty and may well require ongoing flexibility in our plans over the coming year A full set of objectives for the coming year is outlined in the School Development Plan.

Some of the key considerations for the coming year include:

- Prioritising interventions for those pupils most impacted by the pandemic to close gaps and return progress to pre-pandemic trajectories
- Complete planned premises and health and safety improvements at Gateway and ensure their maintenance at a high standard
- Ensuring effective therapy provision is in place, prioritising pupils whose programmes were most impacted over the last year
- Ensure effectiveness of curriculum leadership and embedding of recent curriculum changes
- Continue to develop and embed the SCERT and communication strategies at Primary and extension to Secondary as appropriate
- Build on opportunities across both Clarendon settings and the wider Trust to share expertise, support one another and promote outstanding education
- Target the improvement of attendance at all settings and a reduction in unauthorised absence
- Ensure that opportunities are taken to broaden pupil experiences beyond the school environment, to further develop cultural capital and build relationships with our local communities

B: A Framework for Governance

The Governing Body (LGB) has three core functions for the school:

- Setting the strategic direction for Clarendon
- Holding the headteacher to account for performance and improvement of the school
- Ensuring financial health, probity and value for money

How we work:

1. Composition and remit

The composition of the LGB is laid out in the Auriga Academy Trust Scheme of Delegation and aims to include a wide cross section of the stakeholders from the community we represent.

The current composition is 11 governors (2 parent governors, 1 LA governor, 2 Staff governors and 6 co-opted governors).

- Parent governors are elected by the parent body.
- The two staff governors comprise the HT and one teacher elected by the teaching staff.
- The co-opted governors will always include one member of the wider support staff.
- The appointment of other co-opted governors as vacancies arise will have regard to any gaps in skills that are identified as being required by the LGB. The governing body will undertake a skills audit biannually to ensure current skill sets are identified and utilised and potential gaps highlighted.

Currently the LGB also has several Associate Members, who support its work across the provisions as Heads of Centres but have no voting rights. Additional associate members may be appointed as necessary to further meet skills gaps or support succession planning.

The LGB is a corporate body of volunteers who make their decisions jointly and democratically. All members have equal status and responsibility and do not act independently without agreement and authority from the full LGB. All governors abide by and support the majority decisions of the full LGB. The overriding concern of all governors is the welfare of the school as a whole and not the separate interests of the individual stakeholder groups from which they might be drawn.

All governors are expected to abide by the Nolan principles of public life:

- **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 benefits for themselves, their family or their friends.
- **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.
- **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.
- **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.
- **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 it.
- **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.
- **Leadership** Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

2. Commitment

Governors

The role of a school governor takes a commitment of time and energy in getting to know the school well and in becoming actively involved in the work of both the LGB and the wider life of the school.

- Attendance is expected at all full LGB meetings, including the annual Strategy Day with apologies sent to the clerk in advance in those exceptional circumstances where attendance is not possible.
- A high level of attendance is essential in remaining in touch and informed about the school and the LGB reserve the right to revoke membership of the LGB in the case of governors missing three meetings in any 12-month rolling period (to including the Autumn Strategy Day, full LGB meetings and committee meetings). The clerk will send a reminder of this after two absences.
- Governors should commit to membership of at least one of the LGB committees or a Lead Governor Role. They should present apologies in advance of any meetings in these capacities they might be unable to attend.
- Governors should come to meetings having read all the papers beforehand and prepared to actively contribute to discussions and ask questions.
- All governors should undertake visits to school other than for meetings ideally every term.
- Governors should be prepared to take on delegated roles on behalf of the LGB and, in particular for non-school governors, that of one of the link governors.
- Governors need to be willing to undertake appropriate training to support them in their role (see section 6)
- Governors should always feedback the knowledge they gain from visits and training to the full LGB, in written form. There are forms on Governor Hub designed for this purpose.
- Governors will always respect the confidentiality of discussions and votes within LGB and committee meetings as well as those subjects that are deemed by the LGB to be confidential.

School Leaders

- The headteacher and senior leadership team undertake to provide the LGB with the information they need to fulfil their role, to provide reports and requested data and information in a timely manner, to answer their questions openly and honestly and to facilitate governor and trustee visits to the school.
- The school and LGB take data protection issues seriously and individual pupils must not be named or identified in LGB meetings or documents, and pupil data must be anonymised before presentation to governors. Where appropriate staff data will also be anonymised.
- Clarendon recognises the importance of governors being well-informed and the important part training can play in this and supports access to the governors training provided by Achieving for Children (AfC) and membership of a number of other governor support organisation to facilitate access to any necessary training agreed in LGB meetings.
- The school will provide reasonable expenses, including childcare, to governors to enable them to carry out their duties as outlined in the Governors' Allowances Policy.

3. Meetings

An outline programme for all meetings of the full LGB and its committees is set out in the Annual Programme. The full LGB meets termly with an additional Strategy Day in the summer term. The dates for all meetings across the Trust are set at the end summer term for the full subsequent academic year to ensure the appropriate flow of information between levels of governance within the Trust.

There are two committees which meet termly and more often if required by the LGB or by their workload. Each committee will have at least one link staff member from the headship team.

The two committees are as follows:

- ✓ Pupil Attainment, Achievement and Wellbeing
- ✓ Personnel

Additional working parties may be convened by the LGB to undertake specific, well-defined projects. Agendas for all meetings are agreed between the chair, headteacher (or relevant staff member) and clerk and circulated well in advance. In principle as much information as possible should be circulated in written reports 7 – 10 days in advance to enable governors to arrive fully informed and ready and able to contribute constructively to discussions and ask pertinent questions. Commitment from all governors to regular attendance at meetings, full preparation and a willingness to make contributions to discussions and become involved as far as possible in the life of the school are essential to the effective functioning of the LGB. All meetings are clerked, actions noted and minutes circulated to all governors and noted at full LGB meetings.

Monitoring in three further specific areas will be undertaken through the annual appointment of two lead governors with appropriate expertise, skills and training:

- ✓ Finance

One or both meeting monthly with the Headteacher and Finance Director

- ✓ Health and Safety and Premises

One or both meeting termly with the Trust Estates Coordinator, Finance Director and Headteacher

- ✓ Safeguarding

One or both meeting at least termly with the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead

The outcomes of these meetings along with any recommendations will be reported in written format to the full Local Governing Body in an appropriate format.

4. Link Governors

These governors undertake to attend relevant meetings, liaise with named members of staff and feed back to the full LGB via a governor visit report form. It is expected that these positions will require a minimum of a termly visit to school. Governors have a responsibility to inform themselves about these areas of specialism and to attend any relevant training. There is a LGB document outlining in full the roles and responsibilities of these governors. The areas of responsibility for the link governors are reviewed at the beginning of each year and are allotted to cover key school development priority areas.

5. Governor Visits

These form a vital part of the monitoring role of governors enabling them to get to know the school and how it operates, assess the implementation of actions arising from their decisions, support school events and to appreciate the successes being achieved and the challenges being faced. There is a protocol for governor visits which governors should familiarise themselves with and observe and also a feedback form to complete after each visit (termly for regular visits) to provide more targeted information to the full LGB along with any recommendations. Completed forms should be sent to the HT out of courtesy and to minimise misunderstandings. The HT will forward these to the clerk for full circulation ahead of the subsequent full governing body.

6. Policies and Procedures

A number of policies, particularly those covering HR, are Trust level policies agreed at Trust level with input from all academies including Clarendon. However, the LGB remain responsible for determining that all necessary statutory and other appropriate policies, plans and procedures are agreed, implemented and functioning to provide an effective framework to ensure that Clarendon is a safe environment for all pupils and staff and that our aims and objectives are met. Each committee has responsibility for reviewing and monitoring the relevant policies and sections of the SDP as set out in the annual programme.

7. Training

- Governors should take every opportunity to enhance their effectiveness through the training available both through the Local Authority Governors Support Service, online through the NGA and the National College and through specific school-based sessions as well as other opportunities that may arise.
- Those new to the role should undertake the two-part LA course 'New Governors – Understanding Your Role' as soon as is practical and which must be completed within a year of appointment.
- All governors should also undertake the online AfC Safeguarding basic awareness training at an early opportunity.
- All governors should attend an absolute minimum of one training session annually. It should be noted that best practice involves refreshing training in any subject every three years.
- Knowledge gained from training should be shared with the full LGB by means of a written report of at least key points, there is a pro-forma to provide guidance on feedback.
- Training needs will be reviewed regularly in full LGB meetings.
- The Trust also hold membership of The Key for School Governors and The National Governance Association. All governors are expected to sign up to these organisations (details are available from the clerk) and access the resources relevant to their responsibilities.

8. Self-Evaluation and Engagement with Stakeholders

- Governors will undertake an annual self-assessment of the effectiveness of the governing body.
- The governors' section on the school website will include an annual report of the governing body's work.
- Trust and school newsletters to stakeholders should include a governor's section where possible and appropriate.
- To supplement feedback from staff gained in visits and school meetings attended governors will circulate a questionnaire to all staff annually.
- Governor representation whenever possible will be ensured at the new parents' induction afternoon and all parents' evenings.
- Questionnaires will also be used to gauge parental satisfaction to supplement feedback in annual reviews.
- A standard pupil questionnaire is undertaken every three years which will be supplemented by less formal polls facilitated through the school council and feedback in annual reviews.

C: Monitoring of School Performance Indicators

To support governors focus on their monitoring role a set of Key performance Indicators has been compiled at both Trust and School level which will be reviewed annually. The status of and progress in these areas are reported to the full local governing body through Headteachers reports, committee meeting minutes and reports from lead Governor discussions and link governor visits. These are set out in a separate document which is supplemented by an Annual Programme for the Full Governing Body and its constituent committees supporting governors in gaining the necessary broader knowledge of the school in order to fulfil their role effectively.

Signed Agreement

(to be completed annually)

I confirm that I have read and understood the Clarendon Governing Body Code. I am prepared to make the commitment involved in becoming an active member of the Clarendon Governing Body as outlined in the Code above and to play my part in supporting Clarendon in its aspiration to be a centre of excellence always striving for improvement.

Signed _____

Name _____

Date _____